

ESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1995
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LONDON (R) — robbers took a 225,000 (£394,000) British Queen Elizabeth II gold coin from a jeweller's shop in London on Tuesday. The coin, which was worth about £250,000, was stolen from a jeweller's shop in the Strand, central London. The jeweller, who was not named, said the coin was stolen from a display case. The coin was found by a passer-by and handed to the police. The police are currently searching for the robbers. The coin was stolen from a jeweller's shop in the Strand, central London. The jeweller, who was not named, said the coin was stolen from a display case. The coin was found by a passer-by and handed to the police. The police are currently searching for the robbers.

'Khomeini backed out of war with Israel'
TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran sent troops to Syria after Israeli forces invaded Lebanon in 1982 but the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini backed out of a confrontation with the Jewish state, a former ambassador to Damascus said. Ali Akbar Mohtashemi, in an interview published Tuesday in Jahan-Islam newspaper, said Iran "decided to send army troops as well as Revolutionary Guards and volunteer militiamen to help the Syrian army." The deployment was launched just days after the start of the invasion in June 1982, in case of a confrontation between Israel and Syria, which has had troops in Lebanon since 1976. "Two or three planes arrived with back-up troops, but the operation stopped at the order" of Mr. Khomeini, said Mr. Mohtashemi, a leader of Islamic radicals and former interior minister who has been sidelined from power. Mr. Mohtashemi, who as ambassador to Syria at the time had what he called "secret and unofficial responsibilities" in Lebanon, said the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran decided to avoid a direct confrontation with Israel. He returned to Iran and tried in vain to persuade Khomeini to resume the operation.

Jordan Times

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Syria, Jordan discuss trade
DAMASCUS (Petra) — Syrian Deputy Prime Minister Salim Yasin on Tuesday received a Jordanian trade delegation headed by Hamdi Tabbaa and reviewed scopes of economic cooperation and means of enhancing trade exchange. The two sides also discussed issues pertaining to setting up joint investment projects and lifting obstacles facing the smooth flow of commodities between the two countries. The delegation proposed the establishment of an Arab economic bloc capable of serving Arab interests. Syrian Minister of Industry and Trade Mohammad Al Imadi also received the delegation members and discussed with them issues related to setting up joint investments, in addition to activating economic integration. Mr. Imadi said Syria gives priority to importing Jordanian products and referred to a protocol signed here, heralding the establishment of a Syrian-Jordanian Businessmen Council. Such councils will serve the common interests of both countries, through enhancing cooperation between the private sectors in both countries. Mr. Imadi said Syria was ready to increase its imports of Jordanian cement.

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Israeli soldiers no longer to shoot infiltrators on sight

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli soldiers are no longer allowed to shoot "infiltrators" on sight along the border with Jordan following the peace treaty with the Kingdom, military officials said Tuesday. Under the new rules, troops can only shoot after coming under fire. The officials said central region commander General Ilan Biran had issued the open fire orders to take into account the "new situation" created by the Oct. 26 peace agreement. However, two Israelis who have just completed reserve duty along the border, told Israel Radio no soldier in their unit would obey. "It is impossible to ask a soldier not to react when he is a target and to wait without doing anything until someone fires at him," said Avraham Ben-Zion. "We are not going to put our lives at risk, even if we face military prison," added his comrade Paul Elbar.

Israel, Oman move to build up ties

MUSCAT (AFP) — Israel and Oman are to press ahead with discussions to build up ties, the Omani minister of state for foreign affairs said Tuesday. Yusuf Ben Alawi Abdullah, quoted by the official news agency ONA, said his meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres last Saturday in Jordan was part of a "dialogue... aimed at strengthening bilateral relations." "We agreed to continue dialogue, through contacts and meetings in order to continue studying this issue," Mr. Ben Alawi and Mr. Peres, who met in Amman, also discussed the opening of interest sections in Oman and Israel, and the outcome of the Arab-Israeli summit in Cairo last Thursday, Israeli officials said.

Carns tipped to be next head of CIA

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton has decided to nominate retired Air Force General Michael Carns to be the new director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and could announce his choice as early as Wednesday, administration officials said Tuesday. "Carns is the guy, and his nomination could be announced as early as tomorrow. All that remains to be done is working out the logistics," one official said.

Meeting studies problem of beggars

AMMAN (Petra) — Social Development Minister Salwa Damsi-Masri on Tuesday chaired a meeting for the planning, coordination and administrative development committee during which she reviewed a workplan of the social development department. Mrs. Masri called for assessing the problem of beggars in Jordan, identifying the groups of beggars and finding solutions to the problem. She stressed the importance of formulating a clear-cut policy to overcome the problem. The minister also called for formulating a policy to help the handicapped, especially those above 40 years.

Amnesty censures Turkey, PKK

LONDON (AFP) — Amnesty International accused Wednesday both the Turkish government and the separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) of wholesale human rights violations. Turkish security forces, the London-based rights group said in a communique, violate human rights on a daily basis and will continue to do so until the government ends its policy of blanket denial. "But those violations, it said, have been 'matched by the actions of the PKK, which has carried out summary executions and killed civilians during attacks on Kurdish communities believed to support the government.'"

Crown Prince stresses need to boost work of Jordanian negotiators

Prince Hassan calls for activating Higher Committee in bilaterals, multilaterals

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Tuesday chaired a meeting of a supreme panel guiding Jordan's participation in the Middle East peace negotiations and reviewed the progress in the peace process and the implementation of the Oct. 26 peace treaty signed between Jordan and Israel. The Crown Prince, who heads the Higher Steering Committee for the peace negotiations, called for reactivating the role of the committee so that it could give a boost to the actual negotiations with Israel. Hani Al Mulki, head of the Jordanian committee in charge of implementing the peace treaty with Israel, said the Crown Prince was referring to the sub-committees negotiating with Israel in various sectors and was underlining that these negotiators needed guidance from the Higher Steering Committee. The Higher Steering Committee was set up at the outset of the peace negotiations. Chaired by the Crown Prince himself, the committee includes the prime minister, the chief of the Royal Court, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, several senior cabinet members and other top-ranking officials representing the various branches of government and sectors of the country. During Tuesday's meeting, the Crown Prince paid tribute to the achievements of the negotiators, and "stressed the need for activating the Higher Steering Committee so that it could give a boost to the role of the Jordanian negotiators, particularly at this time when political and economic developments are gaining momentum." The reference was to the task that awaits Jordan as it moves to consolidate peace with Israel and reorganise the Kingdom's internal front to meet the requirements of the era of peace after the peace treaty ended the country's preoccupation with the Middle East conflict on a bilateral level. The Crown Prince called for defining "national priorities in the bilateral as well as multilateral phases of the peace process with a view to serving national interests." The Crown Prince also reviewed programmes planned to be implemented in the months ahead, noting that specialised workshops would be held to prepare for a conference that Amman would host in October as a follow-up to the Casablanca economic summit on the Middle East and North Africa held last year. Dr. Mulki briefed the Higher Steering Committee on the outcome of the negotiations and discussions held so far with Israel on the implementation of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty. The negotiations have so far produced agreements on border and security, crossing

PNA police arrest dozens in Gaza; Arafat vows sweep

GAZA (Agencies) — Palestinian police on Tuesday rounded up activists of a hardline group that has claimed responsibility for shooting down an Israeli security guard in the Gaza Strip. Palestinian security officials said. Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat vowed to fight fanatic and extremist forces. Security officials in Gaza said Palestine National Authority (PNA) police rounded up at least 45 supporters of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP). The Syria-based DFLP, led by Nayef Hawatmeh, claimed responsibility in Damascus for Monday's shooting of the guard in a convoy delivering petrol to Gaza. Police also arrested "a number" of Islamic Resistance groups which call for the des-

Israel to let hardliners to run in self-rule polls

CAIRO (Agencies) — Israel signalled for the first time that groups hostile to the peace process would be allowed to take part in Palestinian elections as negotiators began a new round of autonomy talks in the Egyptian capital. Yoel Singer, head of the Israeli delegation, said the negotiators were tackling all aspects of the long-delayed Palestinian self-rule elections. "The two sides are committed to free and democratic elections which means giving a pulpit for opponents to speak out," said Mr. Singer, who played a leading role in drafting the 1993 autonomy accord with the Palestinians. Rules on candidates from groups which call for the des-

(Continued on page 7)

Arabs, Israel and U.S. open trade talks

TABA (Agencies) — U.S. Commerce Secretary Ron Brown began unprecedented talks here Tuesday with Arabs and Israelis on boosting trade and investment in the Middle East. Mr. Brown, who was accompanied by eight U.S. corporate chiefs, was meeting his counterparts from Egypt, Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). "These talks are aimed at boosting private investment in the various countries involved in the Middle East peace process, particularly in tourism and infrastructure," said Rick Roberts, a spokesman from the U.S. embassy in Cairo. Mr. Brown is expected in Amman early Wednesday for a brief visit during which he is scheduled to meet with several ministers. Mr. Brown came to the (Continued on page 7)



U.S. Commerce Secretary Ronald Brown (center), Israeli Industry and Trade Minister Micha Harish (second right), Jordanian Trade Minister Ali Abul Ragheb (right), his Egyptian counterpart Mahmoud Mohammad Mahmoud (left) and Palestinian Planning and Cooperation Minister Nabil Shaath, pose for photographers in Taba (AFP photo)

5 police officers killed, 9 injured in accident

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Five police officers were killed and nine more were injured on Tuesday in one of Jordan's worst accidents this year at the Irbid-Mafraq road near Muthalath Al Wakir, Civil Defence Department (CDD) and police reports said. The 7:40 a.m. accident involved a military bus that was carrying police officials heading to their jobs from Irbid to Mafraq and a trailer carrying cement. An Irbid police official said that the cause of the accident was still unknown. He told the Jordan Times that the bus and the trailer met head-on on a two-lane road that is not divided by an island, which resulted in the high casualties. "Engineers from Amman have arrived to investigate the accident and will determine the cause of the accident late tonight or early tomorrow," the official said. The deceased were identified by the CDD as Second Lieutenant Abdullah Mohammad Fandi, Corporal Hussein Qodir, Hamid and sergeant Ghabib Ibrahim Mahmoud, Thifallah Mohammad Al Shboul and Mahmoud Ali Shbeit. On Jan. 11, His Majesty King Hussein called for urgent action to end chaos on the Kingdom's roads. The King stressed that solving the traffic problems would be one of the main priorities of the government's programme. The traffic department, in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and the legislative bureau at the Prime Ministry, have presented a draft traffic law to amend some of the existing traffic laws.

Jordan's ambassador heads for Riyadh today

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan's newly appointed ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Hani Khalifeh, leaves for Riyadh today (Wednesday) to assume office and fill the post left vacant for the past four years as a result of Saudi Jordanian differences over the 1990-91 Gulf crisis. Mr. Khalifeh succeeds Nasser Batayneh, who returned home in 1991 after the Gulf war over Kuwait. Saudi Arabia, which recalled its ambassador from Amman in late 1990, has not filled that post yet, but officials say they expect a move from Riyadh in this direction soon. The Saudi Arabian embassy in Amman has been headed at charge d'affaires level since the ambassador was recalled. The Riyadh government also reduced the Jordanian diplomatic presence in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia declined to approve Jordan's nomination of a successor until late last year. It approved Mr. Khalifeh's nomination in September as Jordan's efforts to clear the Arab atmosphere and improve relations started to show positive results. Mr. Khalifeh, in comments carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, indicated that his priority was to consolidate Jordanian-Saudi relations. "I am very pleased to take up the post, which remained vacant for the past four years," Mr. Khalifeh was quoted as saying by Petra. "I am looking forward to working towards strengthening the brotherly relations between the two countries and consolidating cooperation in the services of the Arab Nation." Mr. Khalifeh, who served as Jordan's ambassador to Canada prior to his appointment to Riyadh, reaffirmed the Kingdom's keen interest to unify Arab ranks and "mobilise Arab potential to confront the challenges facing the (Arab) nation." The ambassador expressed confidence that the Saudi Arabian government was also keen to help him perform his mission and strengthen Jordanian-Saudi relations. The Jordanian embassy in Kuwait remains closed. However, senior officials have said that it was only a matter of time before the mission was reopened. The officials point out that a senior Foreign Ministry official visited Kuwait in August and met with senior Kuwaiti officials and inspected the embassy premises. (Continued on page 7)

'25,000 civilians killed in Grozny'

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Some 25,000 civilians have been killed in Grozny since the start of the Russian intervention in Chechnya on December 11, a group of Russian experts and observers reported Tuesday. The group, headed by Russian President Boris Yeltsin's human rights adviser Sergei Kovalev, based its figure on lists of names supplied by refugees from the capital, a group member, Russian parliamentarian Yuli Rybakov, told the Russian news agency Interfax. The group also said it could provide the prosecutor-general with names of witnesses who knew where the bodies of Russian soldiers were buried and who could pinpoint places in the mountains where more dead soldiers had been dumped from Russian helicopters. Mr. Rybakov said "Russian troops, especially interior Ministry troops, took villages and kill those who utter the slightest protest." According to official figures, more than 1,000 Russian soldiers are listed dead or missing in the conflict. The same figures also claim that more than 5,000 Chechen fighters have been killed. Chechen estimates put the number of Russian dead in the tens of thousands. Russian forces continued to shell the Chechen capital Grozny on Tuesday but the bombardment was lighter than on previous days and one rebel said Chechen leaders were discussing whether to withdraw from the shattered city. Chechen commanders acknowledged they have no chance of holding out forever against the Russians.

Majority of Jordanians favour some form of unity with Palestinians

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The majority of Jordanians favour some sort of unity between the Kingdom and Palestine in the event of the emergence of a Palestinian entity in the occupied West Bank and Gaza, according to a public opinion poll released Tuesday. The poll, conducted by the Strategic Studies Centre at the University of Jordan on three samples, said that 72.6 per cent of the population support a sort of unity between Jordan and a Palestinian entity, but the percentage varies sharply on the possible form of unity. There were also differences in the amount of support among the three samples of the poll: the national sample, which covered 1,176 Jordanians over the age of 19 and was carried out between Aug. 30 and Sept. 6; the refugee camp sample, which surveyed 279 during the same period and the public opinion leaders sample, which covered 500 persons including former ministers, parliamentarians and heads of political parties and unions during the period between Oct. 19 and Nov. 22. The poll found that 30.4 per cent of Jordanians of East Bank origin in the national sample support merger with a Palestinian entity in the West Bank and Gaza, compared with 37.8 per cent of Jordanians of Palestinian origin. This form of unity receives less support among the public

opinion leaders of both East Bank and Palestinian origin. It is favoured by 26.5 per cent of Jordanians of East Bank origin and 32.8 per cent of Jordanians of Palestinian origin. The support is highest in the refugee camp sample where it reaches 44.4 per cent. Unity in the form of federation was favoured by 17 per cent of Jordanians of East Bank origin and 20.5 per cent of Jordanians of Palestinian origin in the national sample, while it received the support of 15 per cent of East Bankers and 21.1 per cent of West Bankers in the opinion leaders sample. Confederation is favoured by 18.4 per cent of East Bankers and 20.7 per cent of West Bankers in the national sample. Nineteen per cent of East Bankers and 21.1 per cent of West Bankers in the opinion leader sample, which was chosen randomly, support this form of unity. In the case of the refugee camp sample, the support was 11.8 per cent and 15.4 per cent for confederation and federation respectively. "The majority of opponents to unionist links (between the Kingdom and a Palestinian entity) were of East Bank origin," the poll concluded. The poll revealed that the percentage of the people surveyed who said that there were obstacles to integration of Jordanians of Palestinian and East Bank origin ranged between 14.9 per cent and 34.4 per cent in the national sample, 18.2 per cent to 49 per cent in the opinion leader sample and 11.5 per cent to 38.4 per cent in the camp sample. The belief in the existence of these obstacles was higher in the opinion leader sample and among Jordanians of East Bank origin. For example, the poll found out that 39.1 per cent of East Bankers in the national sample believe that there were differences in the strength of nationalistic feeling among both sectors of society compared to 30 per cent of West Bankers who acknowledged such a difference. The percentage of East Bankers who believe in the existence of this difference in the opinion leader sample is 61.3 per cent compared with 40.5 per cent among West Bankers; 41.1 per cent of East Bankers in the national sample said there was a difference in the degree of loyalty to the country between Jordanians of East Bank and West Bank origins, compared to 22.5 per cent among Jordanians of Palestinian origin. The percentage rises in the sample of opinion leaders, reaching 59.3 per cent among East Bankers and 30 per cent among Jordanians of Palestinian origin. The percentage of people who believed in the existence of separating factors between East Bankers and West Bankers was lowest among refugee camp residents who appeared to report less differences between the two segments of society in almost all areas covered by the poll. Mustafah Hamarneh, director of the Strategic Studies Centre, said the stronger belief among the public opinion leaders in the existence of obstacles to the integration of society could be attributed to either "a higher degree of awareness among them which leads to more critical positions or to their vested interest in maintaining their socio-economic and political status." The poll said that 70.6 per cent of the national sample, 62.6 per cent of the opinion leaders sample and 74.2 per cent of the refugee camp sample believe that there are very limited obstacles that

(Continued on page 7)

Radish	150 C
Spinach	100 C
String Beans	1000 C

Home News

IN BRIEF

Return from Iraq
The International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) has announced that it has received information that a number of Jordanian prisoners of war have been released from Iraq. The ICRC is currently working to identify and repatriate these prisoners.

Japan to prepare Mubarak
The Japanese government is preparing to receive President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt. The preparations include the construction of a special residence for the president and the deployment of security forces.

Refused to issue passport
The Jordanian government has refused to issue a passport to a Palestinian resident. The reason given was that the individual was involved in activities that were considered to be a threat to national security.

Lottery, but a case
A lottery was held in Amman to raise funds for a charitable cause. The lottery was a success, with several prizes being won. The proceeds will be used to support various social and educational programs.

War-damaged
The Jordanian government is working to reconstruct areas that were damaged during the conflict. The reconstruction efforts are focused on rebuilding infrastructure and providing assistance to the affected population.

Iranian corruption
The Jordanian government is concerned about the level of corruption in Iran. The government is working to improve its own anti-corruption measures and is also providing assistance to the Iranian government in this regard.

Hijab train
A train carrying a large number of women wearing hijabs was stopped at a checkpoint. The women were being searched for weapons and other items that might be a threat to national security.

Market prices
The following table shows the market prices for various commodities in Amman. The prices are listed in Jordanian Dinars (JD).

Commodity	Price (JD)
Wheat	1.20
Barley	0.80
Maize	1.50
Soybeans	2.00
Beans	1.80
Peas	1.60
Lentils	1.40
Onions	0.50
Potatoes	0.60
Corn	0.70
Apples	1.00
Oranges	0.90
Lemons	0.80
Tomatoes	0.40
Cucumbers	0.30
Eggs	0.20
Chicken	1.50
Beef	2.00
Lamb	2.20
Pork	1.80
Dairy	1.00

Steel company expected to produce in October

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Jordan Steel Company, a private sector company, expects to start production of iron and steel products for the construction and building industry in October this year, company officials said Tuesday.

The officials said an Italian company which signed a contract to supply the plant and equipment was expected to start delivery and installation by April.

The plant is scheduled to be fully installed by July, and experimental production will start in August. The company is planning to start commercial production in October.

The plant will have an installed production capacity of 180,000 tonnes per year, but the company aims at producing 120,000 tonnes only, the official said.

The firm will eventually raise production to nearly 300,000 tonnes per year with additional machinery and equipment.

The facilities will be the first of its kind and will go a long way in meeting local demands for iron for construction which is now being imported. The output of the company will be mostly specific iron fittings which have a considerable local demand.

Jordan's imports of iron and steel were about \$200 million in 1994. The precise component in this of iron fittings for construction was not immediately known.

According to the company officials, the Jordan Steel Company would also focus on export markets in neighbouring countries, including Syria, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

The company has a paid-up capital of JD 16 million held by 16,000 shareholders. The company officials said no single shareholder owned more than 10 per cent of the equity.

Market analysts noted that the emergence of the company, which was set up in March 1993, comes at a time when the scope for the construction industry in Jordan as well as the Palestinian territories had increased considerably following the breakthroughs in the Middle East peace process.

Plans drawn up by the Jordanian government and expected to be implemented in the course of next few years include a large construction project. It is also estimated that the West Bank and Gaza Strip would absorb several billion dollars in construction in the next decades or so.



AID FOR EDUCATION: The European Union (EU) and the Jordanian government offer scholarships to promising students and to cover the cost of related consultancy services. Mr. Gazzo said that the million European currency units (ECUs) project will be undertaken by the educational faculties of the universities of Jordan, Yarmouk, Muta and Zarqa, in addition to the National Centre for Educational Development and Research over the coming four years. The EU official Planning Rima Khalaf Huneidi, said that said that the grant was part of a 5.5 the project aims at improving the training million ECUs assigned by the EU to the compulsory school levels with a view to development schemes. He

House committee briefed on Jordan-PNA agreements, Cairo Arab-Israeli talks

AMMAN (Petra) — The Foreign Affairs Committee at the Lower House of Parliament Tuesday listened to reports by Cabinet members regarding the agreements signed between Jordan and the Palestine National Authority (PNA) on Jan. 26 in Amman.

Speaking after the meeting, committee chairman, Dr. Abdullah Ensour, said that Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh briefed the committee members on the general agreement between the two sides, and noted that the PNA and Jordan concluded neither a written nor a verbal agreement regarding dual nationality of citizens living here or on the West Bank.

Mr. Rawabdeh told the committee that PNA and Jordanian officials reviewed the official Jordanian position regarding this point, stressing that the Jordanian nationality will not be subject of any discussion, while the Palestinian nationality is the right of those living on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Mr. Rawabdeh noted that Palestinian passports, will serve as a nationality and travel document for the Palestinians, adding that the Palestinians who were issued a two-year passport will continue to have the right to use such a passport for a two-year period, especially for travel purposes. But he noted that such a passport will not be renewed after the lapse of the two-year term.

According to Dr. Ensour, the committee members heard a report from Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti on the Arab-Israeli summit held in Cairo last week.

The meeting did not take place in order to forge an alliance or an axis, something which Jordan adamantly rejects, said Mr. Kabariti.

The minister said that the foreign ministers of Palestine, Jordan and Egypt recently held a coordination meeting in Egypt in order to prepare for their coming meeting with the Israeli foreign minister later this month and the coming meeting which will group the foreign ministers of the four countries as well as the U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

Mr. Kabariti also spoke about his visits to Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates which he described as opening a new chapter in inter-Arab relations.

Mr. Kabariti said that he plans to make other trips to the remaining members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, but gave no date for the trips.

RSCN to attend conference on endangered animal species

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) is taking part in an international conference on reintroduction of endangered animals into their natural habitat, which is due to open in the Italian city of Bologna Wednesday.

Almud Shaalan, in charge of the Arabian oryx herd at Jordan's Shaumari Wildlife Reserve, will outline Jordan's experience in wildlife reserves at the conference, according to RSCN statement Tuesday.

The three-day conference will be attended by representatives of various world organisations concerned with the conservation of nature and the rare animals habitat from Italy, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Kenya as well as Jordan.

Mr. Shaalan, who left for the conference Tuesday, is expected to brief the participants on the measures undertaken by the RSCN to settle the Arabian oryx and other species in their natural habitat, according to the statement.

It said that the conference was expected to tackle ways to help concerned nations to increase the numbers of animals from endangered species and to review a number of cases where certain species became extinct as a result of neglect and lack of proper attention, transportation of animals from one country or place to another and lack of precautionary measures taken upon releasing animals in their natural habitat in order to protect their lives.

The RSCN currently operates five wildlife reserves: Azraq Wetland Reserve, Shaumari Wildlife Reserve, which was established in 1975 and has 150 heads of Arabian Oryx, Wadi Mujib Reserve, Zubiya Reserve, where fallow deer were reintroduced and Dana Wildlife Reserve, near Tafleh.

Meanwhile, an RSCN official said Tuesday that the society was currently benefiting from a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) grant which is financing a survey on Burqu' area to study prospects for creating an additional reserve.

Burqu', which lies close to the borders with Syria, houses an ancient Roman castle and water springs and pools.

The survey is to determine the suitability of the area to be declared as the first "biosphere reserve" in Jordan.

A team consisting of researchers from RSCN, the University of Jordan and the Environment Department is at work on the survey in the Burqu' area.

Money allocated for northern badia hospital

MAFRAQ (Petra) — Mafraq Governor Qasim Majali said in a statement Tuesday that the Health Ministry has allocated JD 200,000 for the initial stage of a hospital to be constructed in the northern Badia district this year.

The health Ministry is still to locate the site for the hospital which will benefit the area's 90,000 inhabitants, according to Mr. Majali.

The northern Badia district accounts for 80 per cent of the total area of the Mafraq Governorate and its population accounts for 55 per cent of the governorate's inhabitants, according to the governor.

In addition to the projected hospital, he said, the Health Ministry will this year set up a comprehensive health centre at Rweished and another at Mansoura at the total cost of JD 250,000 and primary health centres at Sarhan, Baeyi, Umm Al Sirb and Al Kum, at the cost of JD 700,000 for the benefit of the northern Badia residents.

According to Mr. Majali, the northern Badia districts are attracting the attention of the private and public sectors, as most of the agricultural projects and most of the industries are located there.

He said that the Badia areas of the Mafraq Governorate benefit from road networks, electricity and water supplies as well as community centres, schools, post offices, civil defence and other basic services.

Mr. Majali said that the government has allocated JD 559,000 to finance construction of schools and roads. JD 300,000 to finance projects in the Hamad basin area, which is undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture and JD 1.6 million to improve the water networks in the badia districts. These, he said, are all to be carried out during 1995.

Campaign aims to counter iodine deficiency disorders

By Amy Henderson
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Ministry of Health in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) this month are launching an effort to eliminate high occurrences of iodine deficiency disorders (IDD) in Jordanian children by adding iodine to packaged table salt.

The effort to iodise table salt follows a 1993 study of goitre prevalence in Jordan which showed an unusually high occurrence of goitre children 8 to 10 years of age. The study of 337,000 children, conducted by UNICEF, WHO and the Ministry of Health, showed that among children in this age group nearly 38 per cent have goitre.

"Although we do not consider this a chronic health problem, we do consider it a severe health problem," said Dr. Osama Badran, chairman of the IDD research team currently serving as the director of mother and child health care centre in Amman. Normal prevalence of goitre in any society should be less than ten per cent, he told the Jordan Times.

Goitre prevalence in the Amman, Irbid, Balqa, Ma'an and Tafleh governorates is considered severe; in Karak moderate; and in Zarqa and Mafraq, mild, said Dr. Badran, adding that there is no explanation why some districts have more severe cases than others.

The term goitre literally means an enlarged thyroid gland resulting from lack of a thyroid hormone — the main sign that the body is trying to compensate for lack of iodine. When a low level of thyroid hormone is detected by a gland in the brain, the gland stimulates the thyroid gland with its own thyroid stimulation hormone (TSH), forcing the thyroid to work harder (thus enlarging it) to produce more thyroid hormone — much the same way the heart becomes enlarged when it is overworked. Other IDDs, other than the enlargement of the thyroid gland, include cretinism, mental deficiency, hearing loss and other neurological impairments.

Generally, fish and sea food are rich sources of iodine. But it is also found in vegetables grown in soils containing adequate amounts of the element or in dairy, poultry and meat products in cases where animals' diets have included sufficient iodine, which is not the case in Jordan, Dr. Badran said.

There are a number of ways to introduce iodine to the daily diet of population, according to Dr. Badran. For example, in Syria and Iran, iodine is included in bread; iodine is added to water in the Philippines; and in Germany, it is added to most food products.

"Adding (iodine) to bread would be ideal, since not everyone consumes table salt," Dr. Badran said. "But for now, we will be iodising table salt," he said, adding that hopefully, it would also be added to bread in the near future.

UNICEF and WHO recommended levels of iodine in salt range from 22.5-50 milligrammes per kilogramme. However, according to a University of Science and Technology study, of 11 salt brands marketed in Jordan, only three fell within the target range. The most popular brand, Al Azraq Salt, contains only minute traces of iodine.

"What we found in Jordan," said UNICEF Assistant Programme Director Muna Edris, "was that the salt company in Azraq had tried to iodise salt with potassium iodide, which is not heat tolerant." In the production process, she said, the element could not withstand the heat.

"The other option for them was to use potassium iodate which is more heat tolerant, but which also is much more expensive and not cost effective," she added. To buy potassium iodate locally costs between \$80-\$100 per kilogramme, according to Ms. Edris.

According to Dr. Badran, UNICEF has procured two tonnes of potassium iodate at \$10 per kilogramme, which is scheduled to arrive at the factory this month.

"Things are definitely under way," Ms. Edris said. "The factory has been very cooperative. It already has the mechanism to do this with their own equipment, so I expect that once the iodate arrives they will start producing it immediately," she added.

"The next step," she continued, "is to establish a monitoring station and a mechanism to monitor the salt at each step (from production to market shelf spot-checks) to be sure there are sufficient amounts."

Although the salt company could not be reached to discuss the issue, Dr. Badran said he does not expect that the addition of the iodate to salt will increase the price significantly since it has been obtained at a low cost.

Jordan University students threaten strike over 'grade' amendment procrastination

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Students Union at the University of Jordan Tuesday announced that the students will boycott classes at the end of next week and accused the university administration of delaying the issue of amending the 60 per cent grade regulation.

The Students Union is demanding a change of the 60 per cent grade regulation which stipulates that students retaking course they have failed can only obtain a maximum of 60 per cent.

On Nov. 26, the Students Union staged a protest against exams regulations and on Nov. 30, after negotiations reached a deadlock between the Students Union and the university administration, about 1,000 students boycotted classes for two consecutive days.

A Students Union spokesman told reporters on Tuesday, during a press conference held at the university premises, that the university is "delaying the 60 per cent grade issue on purpose."

"We have been waiting for an answer from the university administration for the past two months, but so far we have not received any response," said the spokesman of the Students Union.

He accused the university administration of trying to delay the issue adding that the Students Union was promised by the committee appointed by the university that it would study the matter during the winter break, but instead, "we were surprised that the professor in charge of the study had gone on vacation."

"When we went to discuss the matter with the university president, at the beginning of this semester, we were also surprised that he too had left the country," he added.

University President Fawzi Gharabeh said in a recent interview that the reason the university is against the amendment of the regulation is its own standards and is not obliged to follow the same rules as other universities.

According to Mohammad Khreisat, dean of students affairs, the university "has contacted several universities to study their grade system, and this takes time, it seems that the Students Union is not patient," he told the Jordan Times Tuesday.

The Students Union issued a statement accusing the university administration of harassing the student's committee which was distributing pamphlets in the university.

"It is our legal right, as a Students Union, to distribute pamphlets, and some of the students were called to the deans office and were questioned," claimed the spokesman.

Dr. Khreisat, however, denied such accusations and said that he only called two students for separate incidents. One, he said, was during the strike, when one student barged into one of the classes and forced the students to leave the lecture hall.

The other, he added, used denigrating remarks about the country, "and this happened in front of me."

Dr. Khreisat stressed that the university is seriously considering the issue and studying all its aspects.

"We hope that students will be patient enough because we need to reach a comprehensive decision that will serve all students," Dr. Khreisat said.

In the meantime, the Students Union members insist that a strike will take place if they do not get a "positive" answer from the university administration.

Japan donates computers to school

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government of Japan has decided to donate computer equipment for the Prince Hamzah Ibn Al Hussein School, worth \$44,438, within the framework of the Japanese Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects (GAGP).

The grant contract to this effect was signed between Yuji Ikeda, ambassador of Japan, and Ihsan Shuqum, deputy chairperson of the Administrative Committee of the Circassian Charity Society/Women Branch, on Feb. 7, 1995.

The equipment, consisting of 15 units of computer system, is expected to make advanced computer education available, in accordance with the new curriculum set by the Ministry of Education.

This donation is also regarded as a contribution to the Circassian Community in Jordan whose women branch has been running this school for more than 20 years under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Alia Bint Al Hussein.

Nayef Nawayseh, director

Southern roads blocked by snow

MAAN (Petra) — The snow that fell in the Maan Governorate Monday blocked the Shobak-Wadi Mousa road and Shobak-Bir Bitar road, but workers were Tuesday exerting strenuous efforts to reopen them, according to Maan Governor Hussein Habashneh.

The governor said that the roads were covered by a 20-centimetre blanket of snow, which prompted the local authorities to declare the two roads closed.

Nayef Nawayseh, director

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

FILM

- Film entitled "Jude and Obscure" at the British Council at 7:00 p.m.
- Film entitled "Charlotte Fortens's Mission: Experiment in Freedom" at the American Center at 2:30 p.m.

PLAY

- Play (in Arabic) entitled "Ye Who Are Hearing" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 9:00 p.m.

SEMINAR

- Seminar (in Arabic) entitled "Peace and Future Horizons" by Mr. Youssef Abu Bakr and Mr. Husni Al Shuyab at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

- "Young America" exhibit (with photographs featuring Americans of all ages) at the American Center.
- Exhibition of works by Qasim Al Samir at the Housing Bank Complex Gallery.
- Book exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre. Also showing another exhibition of Arabic Calligraphy.
- Exhibition of the works of Lebanese artist Amin Al Basha at Darat Al Funun. Also showing another exhibition entitled "Phase II-Doors and Windows" by Jordanian artist Ghada Dahdaleh and works by contemporary Arab artists.
- Educational works depicting the life of "Voltaire" at the French Cultural Centre.
- Exhibition of works by Hala Mahayni at the Petra International Hotel in Aqaba.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Qaqish presents credentials in Baghdad

BAGHDAD (J.T.) — Jordan's newly appointed Ambassador to Iraq Bassam Qaqish Tuesday presented his credentials to Izzat Ibrahim, deputy chairman of the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council. Mr. Qaqish succeeds Nasouh Al Majali to the post.

New lawyers sworn in

AMMAN (J.T.) — A group of 28 Jordanian lawyers were sworn in before Justice Minister Hisham Tel and in the presence of the Bar Association President Kamal Nasser. The new lawyers have just completed their two-year training at lawyers offices.

Council to study Constitution

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Council of Islamic Organisations and Societies in Jordan said Tuesday that it was preparing a study of the Jordanian Constitution with the purpose of drawing the concerned authorities' attention to certain violations. A council official said that while the Constitution explicitly provides for equal treatment for all citizens, the country has special courts for trying high officials. The official said that the study, which is due to be published within a month's time, will contain other examples of violations and a clear interpretation of the provisions of the Constitution regarding them.

NAF assists 1,219 families

NORTH SHUNEH (Petra) — The National Aid Fund (NAF) in the northern Jordan Valley district last year provided financial assistance totalling JD 34,112 to 1,219 needy families. Ali Qussem, director of social development here, said that the assistance reached the needy in monthly payments. He said that this year NAF will execute four vocational training projects in the district to enable family heads to earn a living.

Peru, Ecuador diplomats head for Brasilia; fighting continues

LIMA (AP) — Peru and Ecuador have told their deputy foreign ministers to stay in Brasilia, signaling the possibility of new talks to end a war over a swath of dense jungle.

But there was no letup in the fighting Monday, and neither side gave any indication it was ready to relinquish its claim to disputed territory along an unmarked 48-mile section of border near the headwaters of the Cenepa River.

Peru ordered its deputy foreign minister to Brasilia, Brazil's capital, Monday after Ecuador said it was ready to resume peace talks. Ecuador's deputy foreign minister has remained in Brasilia after accompanying President Sixto Duran-Ballen there as part of a three-nation tour to plead his country's case.

The Brazilian Foreign Ministry had no schedule for negotiations. Talks in Rio De Janeiro over the weekend failed to reach a truce, and mediators said Ecuador wanted more time to consider peace proposals.

"Contrary to what might have been said about Ecuador refusing to accept a truce, we've always been ready to accept one," Mr. Duran-Ballen said Monday in Buenos Aires.

Mr. Duran-Ballen visited Brazil, Argentina and Chile Monday. The three countries, along with the United States, are trying to settle the dispute. He said his trip was meant to explain his country's position.

Each side has accused the other of being the aggressor in the nearly two-week-old war on the eastern edge of

the Andes. Peru contends the entire 1,000-mile (1,600 km) border was set by the 1942 treaty that confirmed its victory over Ecuador in a 1941 war. But Ecuador declared the agreement null in 1960.

Skirmishes erupted Jan. 26 in rugged jungle mountains called the Cordillera Del Condor, an area said to contain gold, uranium and other minerals, as well as possible oil reserves.

President Alberto Fujimori has vowed to enforce Peru's claim to the area, and said his forces would "remove all the invaders" from Peruvian territory if diplomacy failed.

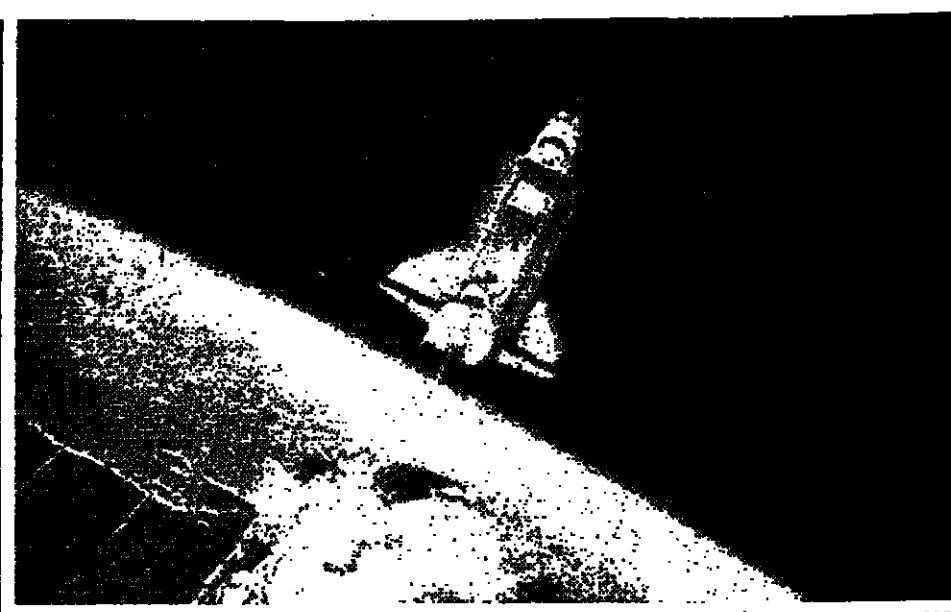
Ecuador said Monday that Peruvian warplanes had renewed attacks on Condor Mirador, an Ecuadorian military lookout 10 miles (16 km) inside the disputed border.

Mr. Fujimori said his forces were closing in on the last Ecuadorian outpost on Peruvian soil, and expected it would be taken soon. But Mr. Duran-Ballen denied Monday that his troops were being defeated.

"We have not evacuated a single site," he said, adding that Ecuadorian forces had, in fact, repelled the Peruvian attacks.

Mr. Fujimori said 22 Peruvian soldiers have been killed or were wounded in the fighting. One Peruvian citizen also was killed after stepping on a land mine. Ecuador said 10 of its soldiers have been killed and 26 wounded.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.



The space shuttle Discovery is photographed approaching the station in the space (AFP) from the Russian space station Mir, as it photo.

Shuttle, Mir dance in orbit

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida (Agencies) — The U.S. shuttle Discovery came within a mere 37 feet (11 metres) of Russia's Mir space station Monday at the climax of an orbital rendezvous that will set the stage for a historic link-up next June.

Shuttle Commander Jim Wetherbee and veteran Cosmonaut Vladimir Titov waved from the shuttle at the cheering and laughing Mir crew as they approached the orbiting outpost.

Com. Wetherbee parked the shuttle in front of Mir at 2:20 p.m. EST (1920 GMT), and the two craft travelled in tandem at 17,500 mph (28,000 kph) from darkness into sunlight high above the northern tip of Japan.

They maintained the position for about 10 minutes, then the shuttle backed away from Mir and circled the space station at a distance of 400 feet (120 metres) while

crew members conducted a photographic survey. "The next time we approach, we will shake your hand and together we will lead our world into the next millennium," Com. Wetherbee radioed the three cosmonauts inside Mir.

Monday's rendezvous was the first step in a programme to merge the human space programmes of the two former cold war enemies. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) plans at least seven more shuttle missions to Mir before the United States and Russia jointly begin construction of an international space station late in 1997.

Mir Commander Alexander Viktorov thanked the shuttle crew and said the close encounter was a victory for international cooperation. "We were one and we were

human," Com. Viktorov said. Com. Wetherbee steered Discovery carefully over the last metres in a precision flying feat that took nearly an hour and was one of the most difficult ever attempted by a shuttle pilot.

The shuttle passed by Mir at a speed of 28,000 kilometres per hour (17,500 miles per hour) before pulling back and circling the space station.

Mir cameras beamed down crystal-clear images of the shuttle with Earth in the background as crew members pressed their faces up against the spaceship's windows to soak up the view.

Astronauts and cosmonauts waved at one another during the approach and Com. Wetherbee told mission control: "This is the most beautiful thing I've ever seen in space."

18 killed, 7 hurt in S. Korean ship fire

SEOUL (R) — Eighteen people were killed and seven seriously injured in a fire aboard a container vessel being repaired in a South Korean shipyard Tuesday, police said.

The 17,682-tonne ship, Hanjin Busan, caught fire in drydock in the southern port city of Pusan, a spokesman of Hanjin Shipping Ltd, the ship's owners, said.

"The container vessel caught fire in its engine room and was quickly engulfed in flames," he said.

The spokesman said 16 were confirmed killed and

three were missing but a police officer later said two more bodies were found in the vessel by rescuers.

The dead were all thought to be shipyard workers, the officer said.

Police said rescue workers cut holes in the hull to aid the search for survivors because even though the fire was brought under control within three hours, toxic smoke filled the ship, preventing them from entering the engine room.

"Four points were cut out at lower parts of the ship to release the gas. Rescuers are

still looking for the missing," a police officer said nearly seven hours after the fire broke out.

He said he suspected sparks from welding machines caused the fire. Television pictures showed dark and light smoke billowing from the superstructure of the ship while firefighters directed jets of foam.

The ship was being repaired by Hanjin Heavy Industries Co. Ltd. Both Hanjin Heavy and Hanjin Shipping are member companies of the Hanjin Group, one of South Korea's top-10 business conglomerates.

Clinton close to naming new CIA chief

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — President Bill Clinton is close to nominating retired U.S. Air Force General Michael Carns as the new director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and could make an announcement as early as Wednesday, CNN cable television reported.

Cable News Network (CNN) said Gen. Carns' appointment was not definite but Mr. Clinton was very close to making a decision on the next top U.S. spymaster.

The White House declined to comment on the report saying only that it was premature to speculate on the announcement.

"The president will announce his choice when he thinks it's appropriate. To speculate on a candidate before then is imprudent," a White House spokesman told Reuters.

CNN said Gen. Carns was a former vice chief of staff of the air force.

Former CIA Director James Woolsey resigned last December after sharp criticism of his handling of the case of confessed CIA turncoat Aldrich Ames, the agency's budget and efforts to reshape the intelligence community.

President Clinton said Monday that he was prepared to fight for Dr. Foster's confirmation for surgeon general even though he has performed abortions.

"Well, I'm going to fight for him," Mr. Clinton told reporters in the Oval Office. Senate confirmation of the 61-year-old doctor originally seemed assured, but revelations that Dr. Foster performed abortions has caused trouble for him among conservatives.

At the White House's request, Dr. Foster issued a statement on Friday saying that he had performed "fewer than a dozen" abortions

Kyrgyzstan elections fill only 13 of 105 seats in new parliament

BISHKEK, Kyrgyzstan (AP) — While voters turned out in impressive numbers for the first post-independence parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan, they elected only 13 of 105 deputies, news agencies said.

The Central Asian republic will hold a second round of elections on Feb. 19 to fill the remaining 92 seats, the ITAR-TASS news agency said.

In Sunday's elections, 72.8 per cent of the 2.2 million registered voters cast their ballots, but a glut of candidates had many predicting runoffs.

More than 1,000 candi-

dates from 12 parties and dozens of movements are competing for seats in the bicameral parliament, the Jogorku Kenesh. There are an average of 10 candidates per seat, with as many as 18 vying for some seats in the capital, Bishkek.

Among the 13 elected Sunday in the former Soviet republic were acclaimed writer Chingiz Aitmatov and two prominent former Communist Party leaders, ITAR-TASS said.

Kyrgyzstan's earlier parliament was dissolved last fall in a government crisis.

In September, 168 legislators who accused their parliamentary leaders of "intri-

gues" forced a suspension of parliament and the resignation of the government.

Kyrgyzstan, with a population of 4.5 million, has experienced serious problems trying to develop a market economy but still has one of the more prosperous ones in former Soviet Central Asia.

Its president, Askar Akayev, had been known as the most democratic leader in the region until parliament's suspension.

"Those who accused me of dictatorship and lack of democracy can see that democracy lives on in Kyrgyzstan," Mr. Akayev told the Interfax News Agency Monday.

Pyongyang calls Kim's birthday 'greatest holiday'

TOKYO (R) — North Korea Tuesday declared the birthday of leader Kim Jong-Il "the greatest holiday of the nation" but offered no indication of whether Kim will make a rare public appearance on that day, Feb. 16.

It also gave no clue as to when Mr. Kim, who will be 53, will formally assume control of the Stalinist state.

"It is the unanimous desire of the Korean people to significantly celebrate the birthday of Comrade Kim Jong-Il, the great leader of our party and our people," the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said.

It said the Central People's Committee had issued a decree designating Feb. 16 and 17 as national holidays and ordered that "all the organs, enterprises, organisations and families shall hoist the national flag of the DPRK (North Korea) on these days."

The decree is the culmination of a 20-year process of elevating the importance of Mr. Kim's birthday that parallels its grooming as heir-apparent to his father Kim Il-Sung, founder and paramount leader of North Korea until his death last July.

Analysts of the secretive Communist state said Mr. Kim's birthday was made an "extraordinary day off work" in 1975, upgraded to a "regular day off work" in 1976 finally made a "public holiday" in 1982. This was extended to include Feb. 17 in 1986, they said.

The late Kim Il-Sung sought to make his son's birthday the "greatest holiday of the nation" in 1992, but the younger Kim declined out of his "absolute loyalty and noble moral sense of duty" to his father and his "unbounded modesty," KCNA said.

KCNA's announcement of the decree, in a report monitored in Tokyo, was followed by official reports that Mr. Kim's birthday was celebrated in Russia, Mozambique, Madagascar and other states.

But the state-run media gave no indication that Mr. Kim will mark next week's birthday by making a public appearance. He has been seen in public only three times since his father's death.

Pyongyang has repeatedly asserted that Mr. Kim is in control of North Korean affairs, but he has yet to assume the posts of president and chief of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea held by his father.

Burma troops continue shelling rebel camps

BANGKOK (AFP) — Burmese troops continued to shell Karen rebel bases along the border with Thailand, Burmese sources said Tuesday, while the rebels said the Rangoon junta had never seriously wanted peace.

The fighting between Rangoon troops and the rebel Karen National Union (KNU) also prompted Bangkok to repeat a warning that its forces would return fire if any shells lands on Thai soil.

One source in Chiang Mai told AFP by telephone that Burmese shelling of the Karen border stronghold of Kawmoora has been "continuous."

"There has been an increase in the shelling," he said. "It is still going on even now."

The source estimated that in recent days, as many as 1,000 shells had rained down

on Kawmoora, some 15 kilometres (nine miles) south of Mawlaik, where the border between Burma and Thailand makes a horseshoe-shaped bend.

"But I have not heard about any ground fighting," the source said, adding that Rangoon government troops had assaulted the small but heavily fortified enclave twice in late December.

Another KNU source said Burmese troops had also been shelling the Karen outpost of Kawmawlaw.

The KNU headquarters said in a statement Tuesday it was willing to hold peace talks with the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) in Rangoon, but added that it appeared the junta was not serious about wanting peace.

S. Africa can survive post-Mandela — De Klerk

SYDNEY (R) — South Africa would be severely hit if anything should happen to President Nelson Mandela but the country can also survive such a crisis, Deputy President F.W. De Klerk said Tuesday.

"If President Mandela, because of his age or illness or other reasons, suddenly vacated the position, there will be a shudder through the international community and South Africa," Mr. De Klerk told a business lunch in Sydney.

"But I am convinced it will not be lasting, because the ANC (Mandela's African National Congress) has a good depth of leadership," he said.

The ANC could have difficulty maintaining unity without Mr. Mandela around, however, he added. "President Mandela is a great figure within the ANC and it might be that his successor might not keep the divergent elements inside the ANC together."

Mr. De Klerk, in Australia for a five-day visit from Monday, said extremists from both the left and right had lost support in the new South Africa.

"I think as long as we cooperate we will be able to manage the lunatics," he said.

Mr. De Klerk was South Africa's last white president before Mr. Mandela defeated him in the country's first all-race elections last April.

Last month Mr. De Klerk threatened to withdraw his National Party from the government of national unity with the ANC over differences with Mr. Mandela on apartheid-era amnesty.

Mr. De Klerk said he is now committed to remaining within the government as

long as the ANC cooperates. "I am committed to continue to do so as long as the ANC adheres to the spirit of consensus which underlies our transitional constitution. And I have recently been reassured on that score," he said.

"The government of national unity is functioning reasonably well, despite the recent problems between President Mandela and me."

South Africa is due for a major political realignment sometime within the next two to six years, Mr. De Klerk said.

"The future of politics in South Africa lies in its moving away from race. Ethnically-based parties are doomed as minority parties," he said.

"To look at South Africa in black and white terms is not to be fully realistic in South Africa."

"White is not homogenous in South Africa, black is not homogenous in South Africa. We have 11 official languages. Zulu is as different to Sotho as French is from German or Italian."

He maintained his National Party was no longer a white-based party, but the country's most multiracial party.

"We claim to be the most non-racial party in South Africa because we have the best spread of different racial groups," he said.

"I am no longer a white leader of a white party," he said. "I foresee the day when the National Party will have a black leader if this is the best man or woman for the job."

Mr. De Klerk's visit to Australia, and later Malaysia, over the next two weeks is aimed at promoting business ties and investment opportunities.

Sister's tearful testimony ends in Simpson case

LOS ANGELES (R) — Nicole Brown Simpson's sister ended two days of tearful, emotional testimony in the O.J. Simpson double murder trial Monday, sobbing uncontrollably as she told the jury of the last moments spent with her slain sister.

The panel also saw graphic photographs of Simpson's beaten ex-wife as her weeping sister, Denise Brown, testified the football legend humiliated Nicole Brown Simpson while she was pregnant by calling her a "fat pig."

Ms. Brown shook with sobs as she recalled the last time she saw her sister, just hours before Nicole was stabbed and slashed to death outside her townhouse in an upscale section of Los Angeles.

Recalling the events of June 12, Ms. Brown said she joined Nicole, her sister's two children, Sydney, 8, and Justin, 5, and other members of the Brown family for dinner at the Mezzaluna Restaurant after they attended a dance recital in which Sydney appeared.

After the meal, Nicole said she was taking her children for ice cream, Ms. Brown said. "We kissed each other

goodbye. That was the last thing I told her, was that I loved her," Ms. Brown said, her words barely audible above her sobs.

"I'm sorry," she said, referring to her crying. Superior Court Judge Lance Ito asked her if she was okay to continue her testimony and she nodded.

She said Nicole appeared happy at their last parting. "We'd made so many plans. We were going to take the kids on a camping trip. We were going to go to Yosemite (National Park), we were going to go to Club Med (resort)," Ms. Brown said.

Nicole and her friend Ronald Goldman, a waiter at the Mezzaluna, were killed later that evening. Simpson, who went from football star to broadcaster, actor and TV pitchman, has pleaded not guilty to the murders.

Ms. Brown testified Simpson also attended the June 12 dance recital and that he looked strange.

"He had a very far away look, it was actually really kind of spooky. It was a frightening look."

"He wasn't smiling. He just had a very different look about him. It wasn't just like O.J. walking into a place and saying, 'here I am,' that self-

assured type of attitude. It was more a glazed-over look frightening, dark eyes. It just didn't look like the O.J. that we knew," Ms. Brown said.

But an amateur videotape taken outside the school where the recital took place showed a happy and smiling Simpson, kissing Denise Brown goodbye as Ms. Brown put both of her arms around Simpson's neck.

Simpson is also seen kissing the stepmother of Denise and Nicole Brown, picking up his young son Justin and hugging and kissing him.

The defence also showed a still photograph of a broadly-grinning Simpson presenting his daughter with a bouquet of flowers following the recital.

Ms. Brown earlier testified Simpson told family and friends in front of Nicole during one of her pregnancies that he "hated fat women" and called her a "fat pig."

Ms. Brown said Nicole, her younger sister by two years, reacted to the insults at one point by saying she did not care how much weight she gained, she just wanted Simpson to leave her.

When Nicole lost her pregnancy weight, Ms. Brown said, Simpson would comment, "look at her. She looks

great doesn't she, she's mine."

"She was always like a possession," Ms. Brown said.

Ms. Brown, the prosecution's star witness in its attempt to show that behind the public facade of "Mr-nice-guy" Simpson was a wife-beater with a violent temper, appeared in court wearing a black suit and black blouse, with her dark brown hair pulled back severely into a pony tail.

She frequently wiped tears from her eyes with a tissue during her testimony, especially as she looked at two polaroid pictures she had taken of Nicole after Simpson beat his then-wife on New Year's Day, 1989.

One of the photographs, shown to the jury on a large screen, clearly showed Nicole with a swollen right eye, right cheek and chin.

The second photograph showed Nicole with her right arm raised, displaying a large black, red and yellow bruise covering the whole of the inner side of her upper arm.

Following the 1989 beating of Nicole, the former star football player pleaded not guilty to a single charge of spousal abuse and was ordered to undergo counselling.

Omar Sharif to promote South African tourism

JOHANNESBURG (AFP)

Film star Omar Sharif has begun a visit to South Africa to help promote its tourist industry as well as its feminist industry in a joint project with the ANC Women's League. In an interview with the daily Citizen, Sharif said he was in "50-50 Partnership" with the "Road to Freedom" scheme launched by the feminist movement. The Women's League of the governing African National Congress (ANC) is led by Winnie Mandela, the estranged wife of President Nelson Mandela, who took power after last April's first democratic all-race elections. The actor, who is of Egyptian-Lebanese descent, said the project aimed at giving tourists an itinerary which will show them the historical turning-points in the struggle for democracy among the country's black majority. Visitors will be accompanied on their tour by members of the league, Sharif said, adding that Americans in particular had shown interest. "There is a lot of business to be made in the South Africa tourism industry, and there is a lot we can do to help that industry," he stated. Sharif, who is one of the world's best bridge players and has interests in the gaming industry, also expressed interest in promoting such leisure activities in South Africa, where gambling was banned under white minority governments. "We are looking to see if we can do things on a regional basis," he told the newspaper.

Italian designer raises money to save icons

MOSCOW (AFP) — The caviar and salmon were Russian but the look was entirely Italian when the high-fashion designer Laura Biagiotti put her latest collection on display in a flamboyant Kremlin show organised to raise money to help restore ancient Russian Orthodox icons — the cream of Moscow society — from Andrei Kozyrev and Yevgeny Yasin, ministers of foreign affairs and finance, to "successful" businessmen and their elegant wives — turned out to see 38 Russian top models parade Biagiotti's brightly coloured line at the Kremlin Palace of Congresses. The designer plans to donate part of the proceeds for restoration of the icons of three cathedrals inside the red-brick fortress walls of the Kremlin. But her husband, Gianni Gign, who heads Biagiotti's fashion company, acknowledged that the benefactress also sought to tap the Russian market. "We can do serious work in this country and make several million dollars a year," he said Monday. The fashion show Sunday night, which was broadcast by Russia's main television network, Ostankino, was a formidable public relations event for Biagiotti, who opened a boutique in Moscow a year ago and plans to open another in St. Petersburg this year or next. Her next stop will be Kazan, in the southern Russian Republic of Tatarstan. That may not seem like the likeliest fashion capital, but Biagiotti is gambling on the republic's oil revenues to create demand among Tatarstan's new tycoons.

Man held for theft wins huge damages

LONDON (R) — A man held for nearly five months on charges of stealing 60 pence (£1) from a child was awarded 10,000 pounds (£15,610) in damages by Britain's high court. Gareth Phillips was arrested in September 1991 after a 10-year-old schoolboy in London's smart Chelsea district told police he was the assailant who had snatched his pocket money. Mr. Phillips, who was charged and detained for four and a half months, accused the Metropolitan Police of wrongful arrest, negligence and malicious prosecution. He had pointed out he looked nothing like the slim, 5 foot 9 inch (1.75 metre) assailant with ginger hair and a green tattoo described by the boy. Mr. Phillips is 6 feet 3 inches (1.82 metres) tall and does not have a tattoo. The police did not admit liability but Mr. Phillips' lawyer told the court they had agreed to pay him £10,000, with up to £4,000 (£6,240) retained by police to cover legal costs.



Chechen fighters are helped by local residents as they pull their bus out of thick mud on a road from Urus-Martano to Samashki. This small detachment was on its way to back up Chechen forces in the Samashki area (AFP photo)

Chechen refugees have nowhere left to run

SERNOVODSK, Russia (R) — When the Russian bombs started falling on Grozny, Zara and Zura took their children and fled into the fields. Several panicky moves later, at the outer edge of Chechnya, they have nowhere left to run.

Like the other 8,000 refugees packed into this decrepit Soviet-era mountain resort and the town of Sernovodsk down the hill, the Chechen sisters are scared the Russian helicopters circling overhead will attack them even here.

"God knows what will become of us then," Zara said, suddenly losing the stoical smile which had stayed on her small, bony face through-out a harrowing account of her family's six weeks on the road after escaping from their cellar in the capital Grozny.

"There aren't even any cellars to hide in. The place is full of bursting with refugees. If the Russians start bombing us here, it will be a blood-bath," she added somberly.

Just outside Sernovodsk, at the border with neighbouring

Ingushetia, Russian Border Guards set up a checkpoint a week ago. All who left identity documents behind when they fled Grozny are turned back by troops in two armoured cars.

Most of the refugees here are women and children, cramped one family to a room, ragged laundry strung out between rickety beds. There is no heating or light, and not much food. Many of the children are sick from shock and stress.

Their men have either stayed on at home or fight or guard their houses, or they are dead.

Russian troops launched an onslaught on Grozny on Dec. 31, but in recent weeks they have turned their attention to the villages.

Chechen fighters with only light weapons have managed to keep control of parts of Grozny with a hit-and-run campaign, melting away to the villages to rest before returning refreshed and ready for battle.

Russian forces have taken

revenge on villages they believe are sheltering fighters. Early last week they attacked Samashki, 10 kilometres east of Sernovodsk, as punishment for a Chechen attack on a Russian tank convoy.

"We have no fighters here," Khizar Vitayev, head of Sernovodsk Town Council, said hastily. Sernovodsk had a population of 12,000 people before the refugees started coming.

But the absence of fighters reassures nobody that their latest temporary will escape the fate of Samashki.

An anxious crowd gathered outside one ex-holiday camp building Monday to tell foreign journalists that helicopters had dropped leaflets with a printed appeal by Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin.

It promised to rebuild the homes smashed by the Russian army if they would lay down their guns. It gave a warning, however, that Russia would bomb Sernovodsk if a single shot was fired from there.

The people of Sernovodsk, who have no guns, believe this is a sign the Russians are looking for an excuse to attack them.

"I was walking down the hill two days ago when I came across a neat pile of weapons, just sitting there. There were grenades and grenade launchers and guns," said the head cook, Rumi, a no-nonsense woman in her 50s.

"I got two other women to help and we took them to the council building and handed them in. No one knew where they came from."

Then, yesterday, one of the Russian helicopters landed nearby. We sent a couple of men over to see what the Russians were up to. They came back with another load of weapons, which the helicopter had left behind in another neat pile."

Rumi believes the Russians are providing Sernovodsk with a few guns to provoke some hothead from here into taking a pot-shot at one of them. "That would be all the excuse they need to move in and kill us all off."

Diana wins over Japan

YOKOHAMA, Japan (R) — Britain's Princess Diana held hands Tuesday in a war cemetery with an old soldier and won her way back into the hearts of many Japanese on the second day of what has become a triumphant royal comeback.

Even her wardrobe received a gushing thumbs-up from Japan's own imperial designer who said Princess Diana's suffering in her marriage breakup had turned her from a "flower into a woman."

Since arriving in Japan Monday on her return to full royal duties after a year's self-imposed exile, the princess has not put a foot wrong.

She has spoken Japanese, reached out for children and the elderly and most importantly shown respect for the protocols of a nation still in mourning over last month's earthquake in Kobe where more than 5,000 people died.

Japanese newspapers and television, which paid scant attention to the trip before her arrival, by Tuesday had



Police hold on to crowd barriers but bend down to allow fans a better view of the Princess Diana's four-day official visit (AFP photo)

staff out in full force to cover her every activity.

"Despite scandals and a wrecked marriage, Britain's Princess Diana seems to enjoy unbroken popularity in Japan," Kyodo News Agency reported.

After a book detailed suicide bids, problems with the eating disorder bulimia and the breakup of her marriage to Prince Charles, Princess Diana withdrew from

public life a year ago.

As she forges a new public role as patron of the 125th anniversary celebrations of the British Red Cross and as a member of the advisory commission of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, there had been concern about how Japanese would react to Princess Diana in a country where broken marriages are still frowned on.

But crowds of housewives turned out in bitter cold for the princess's visit to Hodo-gaya War Cemetery in Yokohama, a port city near Tokyo, where she laid a wreath of red carnations for 1,738 Commonwealth war dead.

Dressed in a pearl necklace and a stylish long black coat, she toured the British, Australian, New Zealand, Canadian and Indian sections of the cemetery.

With 10 people including Britain's ambassador and defence attaché, she sang "Oh God Our Help In Ages Past."

"My hands are cold," she told Witfrid Hall, 84, a former British intelligence officer, who was wounded in Burma and now lives in Yokohama.

"I'll warm them for you," he replied, and the two held hands as they talked in the field of dry, brown grass.

Asked how long he held the princess's hands, Mr. Hall replied: "As long as I could."

Princess Diana stood for a while in front of a stone plaque commemorating Private Fredrick Earnest Goldsmith from Kentish town who was killed on Dec. 15, 1942



Princess Diana sings a hymn for fallen soldiers in Japan at the Commonwealth War Cemetery in Yokohama, suburban Tokyo Tuesday (AFP photo)

Sarajevo rebels in new freedom

SARAJEVO (R) — Hundreds of people in besieged Sarajevo flocked to use newly opened roads Tuesday, grabbing the chance to journey out without the risk of being shot.

Witnesses described the scene as orderly chaos as a line of cars stretched back more than one kilometre to await checks by U.N. peacekeepers.

Although the agreement by the Muslim-led government and Bosnian Serbs to open the roads eased the grip on the city, an exasperated United States said it was cutting off talks with the Serbs because of what it called their intransigence over an international plan to end the 34-month-old war.

The roads across the airport were opened to civilian traffic Monday for the first time in seven months in line with a ceasefire agreement that started on Jan. 1.

Bosnian Serb besiegers allowed aid agencies to cross last week.

About 300 cars queued to get out of the Dobrinja suburb Tuesday morning and others waited to come the other way.

Bosnian police checked lists to ensure prior approval had been gained. U.N. peacekeepers searched the cars, using mirrors to check underneath.

Then, a few at a time, cars were escorted across the frontlines by French U.N. armoured personnel carriers.

U.N. peacekeepers said more than 1,000 people from Sarajevo's three communities used the roads Monday to visit neighbouring suburbs which have been within sight but kept out of reach by the war.

Serbs travelled between their strongholds of Ilidza and Lukavica. Muslims and Croats drove across the U.N.-controlled airport to and from government-held Butmir and Dobrinja by bus and car. The suburbs ring the airport.

It was another step towards normality after more than 1,000 days of siege. The truce has halted fighting across most of Bosnia except for the northwest Bihać enclave, where Muslim rebels backed by Serbs from neighbouring Croatia are battling the government army.

In Washington, a senior official said the United States



French U.N. officers check together with Bosnian-Serb soldiers civilian cars leaving Sarajevo across the airport road linking the Bosnian capital with the rest of the government-held Bosnia. The so-called "blue route" was closed since last July and reopened today for the first time (AFP photo)

was breaking off contacts with the Bosnian Serbs because of their refusal to accept a peace plan worked out by the "contact group" of the United States, Russia, Britain, France and Germany.

"There's no point in shutting up the hill from Sarajevo to Pale to listen to the kind of crap which was dished out by (Serb leader Radovan) Karadzic," U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke said.

The talks with the Bosnian Serbs were initiated last month after mediation by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter — a development the Serbs had believed played into their hands.

Mr. Holbrooke said however Mr. Karadzic would not be invited to a French-proposed peace conference unless he changed his mind and accepted the contact group plan.

The Serbs, who control more than 70 per cent of Bosnian territory, last summer and again in January refused to agree to a division of Bosnia into two almost equal parts.

The contact group amended its original plan, which the Muslim-led Bosnian government accepted, to give the Serbs the possibility of the confederation with Serbia they had coveted since the war began in April 1992.

France last week called for a new conference, bringing together the leaders of Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia to break the deadlock.

European Union foreign ministers unanimously endorsed the idea Monday but U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher was cooler.

"What the world doesn't need is another overbuild-up of expectations and to have them dashed because nothing happens," he told Reuters in Washington.

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In Pale, capital of the self-proclaimed Bosnian Serb Republic, Mr. Karadzic poured cold water over the summit idea.

"The meeting could cause no harm but the question is what will its agenda be. They cannot discuss anything on our behalf, especially not (Bosnian President Alija) Izetbegovic," Mr. Karadzic told a Belgrade television station.

"The promise of confederation is hogwash. We want our sovereignty and, when we get it, then we will decide what we are going to do with it," he said.

Meanwhile a political chess game whose outcome could be wider war or new peace in old Yugoslavia is heating up as two implacable rivals prepare for talks and a rebel Serb minority debates its suddenly uncertain future.

Croatia broke a long stalemate in the game last month when it ordered 12,000 U.N. peacekeepers to leave this spring, exposing rebel Serbs whose breakaway state has taken root behind a U.N. ceasefire line since 1992.

Zagreb, countering suspicion that it is clearing the decks for war, announced last week that Foreign Minister Mate Granic will go to Belgrade soon for the first high-level talks between arch-rivals Croatia and Serbia in the Yugoslav capital.

Mr. Granic, expected to travel on Feb. 20, will seek a commitment by Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to diplomatic recognition of Croatia, which seceded from the Serbian-dominated Yugoslav Federation in 1991.

The Croatian Serb minority, which revolted over Zagreb's move to independence, would lose its claim to sovereignty if national patron Milosevic acknowledged Croatia within its U.N.-ratified borders.

An authoritative Serbian source said Mr. Milosevic, Machiavellian master of ethnic politics in old Yugoslavia, now seemed ready to jettison at least part of the "republic of Serb Krajina" (R.K.) as "unnecessary ballast."

Croatia is similarly convinced that Mr. Milosevic is so keen to be rid of economically ruinous U.N. sanctions imposed for fomenting Serb expansionist wars in Croatia and Bosnia that he will strike a deal with Zagreb soon.

India's Congress Party expels Rao's rival

NEW DELHI (R) — India's ruling Congress Party Tuesday expelled former Human Resources Minister Arjun Singh, a leading rival of Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, the head of the party's Disciplinary Action Committee said.

"The committee has taken a decision to remove Arjun Singh from the primary membership of the party for about six years," K. Vijay Bhaskar Reddy told reporters after a committee meeting.

Mr. Singh was suspended from the party on Jan. 24 and later presented with a formal "charge-sheet" for alleged anti-party activities and speaking out against Mr. Rao.

On Monday Mr. Singh rejected the party's charges.

Mr. Reddy said one of the six disciplinary committee members, A.K. Antony, had wanted Mr. Singh's expulsion to be postponed for two weeks.

"But we felt, in view of the elections that are going on, we should maintain discipline in the party," Mr. Reddy said, referring to polls in six states beginning Thursday.

"It is difficult for the party to win otherwise. Unfortunately, this issue has come up after elections were announced."

Mr. Reddy told Reuters that Mr. Singh's expulsion was not required to be ratified by any other party forum. When Congress has

expelled members in the past, it has commonly removed them for six years as it did with Mr. Singh.

Meanwhile brilliant multi-coloured pennants, speeches filled with pointed rhetoric and grandly decorated campaign vehicles are all gimmicks that usually accompany elections in India. But this time, they're missing.

As India's western stake of Maharashtra prepares for assembly elections scheduled in two rounds on Feb. 9 and Feb. 12, the first of six state polls this month and the next, new rules have brought candidates down to earth with a bump.

Posters that make fanciful promises and ear-shattering loudspeakers trumpeting candidates' plans have been outlawed by new legislation which makes offenders liable to fines.

The colour and verve of previous elections have fallen victim in stringent measures introduced by the country's watchdog Election Commission in a bid to make the democratic process cleaner and less corrupt.

One initiative pushed through despite opposition was the distribution of identity cards to voters, begun in November last year but ultimately defeated by the sheer logistics involved.

The state machinery was able to photograph just 46.5 million of Maharashtra's 54 million voters, and only 31.3

million finally received their cards.

But the Election Commission has successfully arranged for video camera operators and government stenographers to attend campaign meetings and record what the candidates say, to discourage them from making appeals on the basis of caste or religion.

Yet some mavericks have managed to find loopholes in the election rules and exploit them to liven up drab campaigning for an election that could be crucial for the future of the ruling Congress Party.

Syed Bukhar of the centrist Bahujan Samaj Party hired an elephant in the crowded south Bombay district of Kharwadi last week, plastered campaign posters all over it and rode it around his constituency, making speeches over a loudspeaker.

The police protested. But Mr. Bukhar was firm. "I am not defacing public or private property," he said. "Neither the elephant nor its mahout (keeper) has complained about the posters."

Election regulations banned loudspeakers on moving vehicles. Mr. Bukhar said, but his elephant was no vehicle. It had no engine.

He countered the idea that he had not received permission for the procession.

"I'm not leading a procession. I can't stop people following me. Besides, a procession is defined as at least five people. The elephant, the

mahout, and myself make only three."

The argument made perfect sense, legally. Stunned, the police had to book Mr. Bukhar for obstructing traffic and ill-treating the elephant by leading it down narrow lanes. He was fined 100 rupees (\$3.18).

Tighter accounting procedures for the money spent on campaigns have forced virtually every candidate to tramp from house to house, personally requesting support from voters.

"I'm exhausted and aching all over after my padyatra (foot-march)," said Jitendra Joshi, Congress candidate from the northwestern suburb of Vile Parle. "Whoever wants to go to the assembly has to work really hard."

A solitary red-and-white banner hangs limply over the entry to the central Bombay campaign office of Manohar Joshi, a popular leader of the regional Hindu Shiv Sena party.

"We've put up just six banners in the constituency," said Sandeep Shikre, a campaign worker for Mr. Joshi.

The limit on total election expenditure has been fixed at 150,000 rupees (\$4,781), enough to provide every voter in the constituency with a campaign leaflet, and no more.

Most candidates have come up against officials unsure how to interpret the new regulations.

Japan again seeks return of Russian-held islands

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan Tuesday renewed demands for the early return of four northern islands held by Russia since the closing stages of World War II, as reports said the Russian foreign minister might visit next month.

It is very desirable not only for the two countries but also for the whole international community that the territorial issue is settled on the basis of the Tokyo declaration," Prime Minister Tomichi Maeyama said at a national meeting here.

The annual meeting at a Tokyo hall was sponsored by the government's Management and Coordination Agency and six organisations to mark the "Northern Territory Day."

Jiji News Agency reported that Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev was likely to visit Japan early next month as part of a tour of North East Asian countries including South Korea.

A Japanese Foreign Ministry spokesman said the two countries were "adjusting the schedule" but declined to confirm the timing.

Mr. Kozyrev was to visit Japan last month, but postponed the trip amid growing tension surrounding the conflict in Chechnya.

Japan and Russia agreed last year on Mr. Kozyrev's visit in January as Tokyo sought a breakthrough in the

dispute over the four islands.

Jiji said the Japanese side was also hoping to use the talks with Mr. Kozyrev to pave the way for a visit to Russia by Mr. Murayama.

Japan has been demanding the return of Habomai, Shikotan, Kunashiri and Etorofu in the strategic Kuril chain just off its northernmost prefecture of Hokkaido, saying they were illegally occupied by the Soviet Union in the closing days of World War II.

In 1993, Russian President Boris Yeltsin and then Japanese Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa agreed in a declaration here on the need to settle the territorial issue.

Russia has said the issue should be resolved on the basis of "law and justice."

"We would like to strengthen national campaigns for the early return of the territories," Management and Coordination Agency Director General Tsuru Yamaguchi said at the meeting here Tuesday.

Some 1,500 representatives from across Japan attended the meeting, which adopted an appeal for local assemblies to adopt resolutions for the return of the disputed islands.

Because of the dispute, Japan and Russia have yet to sign a peace treaty to formally end hostilities during World War II.

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Haste at certain cost

ON THE occasion of the convening of the 51st session of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights in Geneva last week, Rene Felber, the U.N. special rapporteur on the human rights situation in the occupied territories, came up with a controversial proposal, an end to his mandate. Felber, a former Swiss foreign minister, would start a search elsewhere, other than in the field of human rights investigations, for redressing the admittedly grave human rights situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The basis of this proposal is, at best, troublesome since it relies solely on the peace process to improve the human rights condition in the occupied territories. More so in fact since U.S. ambassador to the commission Geraldine Ferraro immediately endorsed Felber's idea and its rationale.

We have no quarrel with the submission that in the final analysis the ultimate solution to the plight of the Palestinians lies in success on the peace front. We do have a difficulty, though, in understanding the call for ending the mandate of the special rapporteur at this stage, when there are still grave human rights violations prior to reaching of a working agreement between the two sides.

The Palestinians and the Israelis remain a long way from achieving peace and the continuation of human rights abuses can only hamper the attainment of the elusive peace. Thus it would seem to us that the best course to speed up the search for a panacea to the human problems in the occupied territories is to keep a close watch on the human rights situation there rather than end current periodic investigations.

There is another dimension also to the human rights case that Felber did not address at all. Besides the promises of the peace process on which he seems to pin too much hope, there is also the question of democracy in the occupied territories. Surely the special rapporteur knows only too well that the ultimate solution to all human rights violations lies in true and genuine democratisation. This aspect calls for a close and continuous watch with regard to not only the West Bank, which is still mostly under Israeli occupation, but also the Gaza Strip and Jericho area where there are signs that the human rights situation is anything but satisfactory. We therefore believe it is much too soon to end the internationally sanctioned investigations in the West Bank and Gaza and hope that the proposal to end the existing machinery for reporting human rights violations does not receive the support of the commission as a whole.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER in Al Ra'i daily Tuesday said that Jordan's invitation of 35 Israeli parliament members to come to Amman and meet with His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan represented another step on the part of the Kingdom to normalise political relations with Israel. For Jordan, said Fahd Al Fanek, the peace treaty has opened the door for normalisation of relations with the Jewish state despite the fact that Israel's actions and practices in the occupied Arab lands continue to come under criticism and condemnation. He said that for its part Jordan continues to back the Palestinian people's right to an independent state in Palestine regardless of Israel's views concerning this specific point. Noting that the Israeli deputies have complained that Jordanian parliament members were not present at the meeting with the King and that Jordanians did not welcome the visit, the writer said Israel is to blame for this situation because it has failed to respond favourably to the requirements of peace so far and persists in its hostile behaviour towards the Palestinians. As if to provide further hostility towards the Arabs and the U.N. resolutions, the head of the Israeli Knesset delegation was careful to mention in his address before the Crown Prince that Jerusalem will continue to be the united capital of the Jewish state. Israel's adamant position can never serve the cause of peace with the Arab states, Fanek continued.

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i daily Tuesday expressed the view that the new draft traffic law in Jordan was unbalanced and unfair because it tends to lay all the blame for road accidents on motorists and sparing no blame for conditions on the road. It has been the habit and practice of the traffic department to blame the drivers for all the road accidents which continue to rise in number despite the penalties, said Husni Ayesh. The writer said that the draft law on traffic failed to mention that the pits and the potholes of water in the roads could be the cause of at least part of the accidents and the traffic department lay the blame on the authorities that are responsible for the condition of the roads.

Washington Watch

Ron Brown: A unique secretary of commerce

By Dr. James Zogby

BY ANY measure, Ron Brown has been a unique U.S. Secretary of Commerce. Over the past 30 years, the individuals who have filled that presidential cabinet post at the Department of Commerce have played rather insignificant roles in the administrations in which they served. But that has not been the case with Ron Brown.

Ron Brown has transformed the traditionally ceremonial nature of the position. In an administration which views trade promotion as an integral component of its overall foreign policy, Mr. Brown's role has been substantial.

And while Secretary Brown has recently faced partisan Republican attacks from some members of the new Congress, he has received high praise from the normally Republican business community. One such business leader recently said: "I'm a Republican, but I can honestly say, we in the U.S. business community have never had a friend in Washington like Ron Brown. He understands that the key to U.S. economic security is export promotion in competitive foreign markets. We've needed support. The Japanese and Europeans get that help from their governments. Now we have friend in Washington who supports our efforts."

Only in office for two years, Mr. Brown has established a high international profile as a globe-trotting secretary of commerce. Bringing delegations of U.S. businessmen with him, he has promoted successful commercial ventures in China, India, South America and the Middle East.

Now in the Middle East for his third visit to the region as secretary of commerce, Mr. Brown brings with him a complex agenda of commercial and foreign policy concerns.

Support for the peace process

Mr. Brown will meet with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, officials of the Palestine National Authority (PNA) and Palestinian businessmen in an effort to support the economic development he knows is critical to the success of the peace process. He will convene two business roundtables, in Ramallah and Gaza, at which he will hear the concerns of the Palestinian business community, especially regarding the impediments that have made economic development difficult. But he will also brief them on the services the U.S. will make available to support the growth of small-and medium-sized business in the occupied territories.

While in Gaza, the secretary will also announce the opening of the first joint U.S.-Palestinian business venture. In so doing he will spotlight the first successful project supported by the U.S.-based Builders for Peace.

In Israel, Mr. Brown will announce the first projects under the aegis of the U.S.-Israel Science and Technology Commission. He will also meet with Israeli government and business leaders.

During his stop in Taba, Secretary Brown will participate in the first ever meeting of U.S., Palestinian, Egyptian, Jordanian and Israeli economic ministers to discuss regional economic cooperation and development.

In Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates, Mr. Brown will meet with heads of state, ministerial counterparts and the business leadership to sign contracts for major development projects and to support further U.S.-Gulf business ventures.

All in all, the trip's agenda is both complex and far-reaching. In making his third sojourn to the Middle East, Secretary Brown is demonstrating his familiarity with the region and its leadership. The secretary also intends the trip to be a visible demonstration of the U.S. commitment to regional peace and long-term mutually beneficial trade relations.

Prior to his departure, Secretary Brown held a briefing for Arab-American business and community leaders at the Department of Commerce. At that meeting he outlined the programme of his six-country regional tour and listened to the concerns and suggestions of the assembled Arab-Americans.

It must be remembered that Mr. Brown is no stranger to the Arab-American community — another respect in which he is unique.

At the 1988 Democratic National Convention, Mr. Brown served as committee chair of the Jesse Jackson for presidential campaign. In that capacity he provided important access to Arab-Americans, whom he understood had long been denied a role in the Democratic Party. And in the intervening years Ron Brown never abandoned that commitment to inclusiveness.

I will never forget that upon assuming the role of Chairman of the Democratic Party in 1989, Mr. Brown invited me to his office for the first official meeting he held as party chair. It was a signal that the exclusion of Arab-Americans from U.S. politics was to be a thing of the past.

While he was party chair, Mr. Brown addressed Arab-American Institute conferences and, despite pressure from those who continued to feel threatened by Arab-American empowerment, he even travelled to meet Arab-American groups in different communities around the U.S. Mr. Brown was also helpful in securing Arab-American roles in the party, on its committees and in the 1992 Clinton presidential campaign.

As commerce secretary, Ron Brown has held numerous meetings with Arab-Americans — a first for any secretary of commerce — and has invited Arab-Americans to accompany him on each of his Middle East trips.

When Bill Clinton won the November 1992 elections, the press immediately began to speculate on who the president-elect would appoint to fill his cabinet. There was one name high on everyone's list: Ron Brown.

As chairman of the party, Mr. Brown was given major credit for the Democratic victory that year. When Democrats had lost hope that a Democrat could return to the White House, it seemed that only Ron Brown continued to believe that the party could win. And during the intensely-fought Democratic presidential primary of 1992, when the

candidates attacked each other with more ferocity than they used on their Republican opponent, it seemed that only Ron Brown held the party faithfuls together.

He was a prodigious vote-getter and fund-raiser. And he brought a uniquely professional staff to work for the party during his tenure as chair.

There were those who felt that an African-American could not succeed in uniting the Democratic Party — Mr. Brown proved them wrong. When President Clinton rewarded Mr. Brown's service with the secretary of commerce post, there were again some voices who wondered whether a liberal Democrat and an African-American could perform well in that role — and again Mr. Brown has proven his sceptics wrong and shown his qualification for high office. And as I have noted, he has turned sceptics in the U.S. business community into his strongest supporters.

Mr. Brown oversees an agency of 36,000 employees working over 100 different departments, with a budget of \$3.6 billion. The range of activity under the Department of Commerce is so broad that it is, at times, baffling, including such diverse organisations as the Foreign Commercial Service, the U.S. Weather Service, the Bureau of Labour Statistics, and the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (which provides daily translations of radio and television broadcasts, and newspaper articles from every major region of the world).

While most past secretaries of commerce have seen their role as ceremonial or as simply administrative, Mr. Brown has defined a new role for himself. In the post cold-war era, in an economically interdependent world where foreign policy at times equals trade policy, Mr. Brown has successfully sought to elevate the role of secretary of commerce into a foreign emissary for U.S. bilateral economic ties with the new major emerging markets (Russia, China, South Africa, the Middle East and India). His efforts have already led to over \$20 billion in new U.S. contracts in those markets; but he has also won goodwill for the U.S. and its international relations everywhere he has travelled.

Mr. Brown is currently under attack from some partisan Republicans in Congress for what they allege are ethical improprieties in some of his dealings before assuming his cabinet post. While the business deals he conducted prior to his confirmation as secretary of commerce have already been reviewed and approved by the various government ethics committees, the attacks continue.

Some feel that these attacks have more to do with denying Mr. Brown any future advancement than they do with any real past indiscretions. President Clinton has reportedly considered asking Mr. Brown to head his 1996 reelection campaign, and some have suggested that, should Secretary of State Warren Christopher resign, Mr. Brown would be an ideal secretary of state (in fact, back in 1991 some newspapers speculated he might be appointed secretary of state).

LETTERS

Casusistry and eloquence

To the Editor:

I AGREE with Cecil Hourani that casusistry should not be substituted for substantiation (Letters, Jordan Times, Jan. 29). It is indeed very difficult, in the absence of proper statistical data (opinion poll?), to gauge the mood of a people, as was ventured by Rami Khouri in his article (Terror, colonialism, and violence in Palestine and Vietnam, Jordan Times, Jan. 24). It becomes inevitable that one has to revert to assessment based on personal experience. But in order to fit assessment with other facts one must carry out an analysis of related events.

In my understanding of the Arab psyche, based on conversations with people from various walks of life, the backdrop to the "peace process" is made up of varying extents of perceiving the following facts:

— Israel possesses some four hundred thermo-nuclear warheads complete with delivery vehicles that can reach the shores of China (Israel/South Africa test programme). Such warheads can hit any Arab capital in a matter of minutes from the time of launching, with horrendous consequences.

— Israel has a mandate to import any number of immigrants that will have, somehow, to have the space and necessary resources for their support.

— The "peace process" has been championed by a broker who can under no circumstances be called fair.

— Arab countries do not have the necessary degree of organisation to support their views militarily against Israel, or anybody else for that matter.

Some kind of accommodation with Israel is therefore called for.

— One of the largest sources of wealth in the world today "Arab" oil, is being drawn out at a tremendous rate, with falling revenues and without much benefit to the indigenous population.

— The religious/cultural factor. This is probably the most difficult to fathom, but it can, at least in part, be explained as a backlash to the other factors.

Probably, it is through considering a combination of the above factors, that one can call a certain group of people (Bait Lid) "terrorists," "freedom fighters," "martyrs" or otherwise. It is also well to remember that it is not unusual for the press (Reuters, etc.) to pass judgement through designation.

A final word about the writings of Mr. Khouri in the Jordan Times. Many of his views are at variance with mine, but I must concede that through his power of intellect he has lifted, almost single-handedly, Jordanian journalism to a higher status.

Dr. Omar Mango,
Amman.

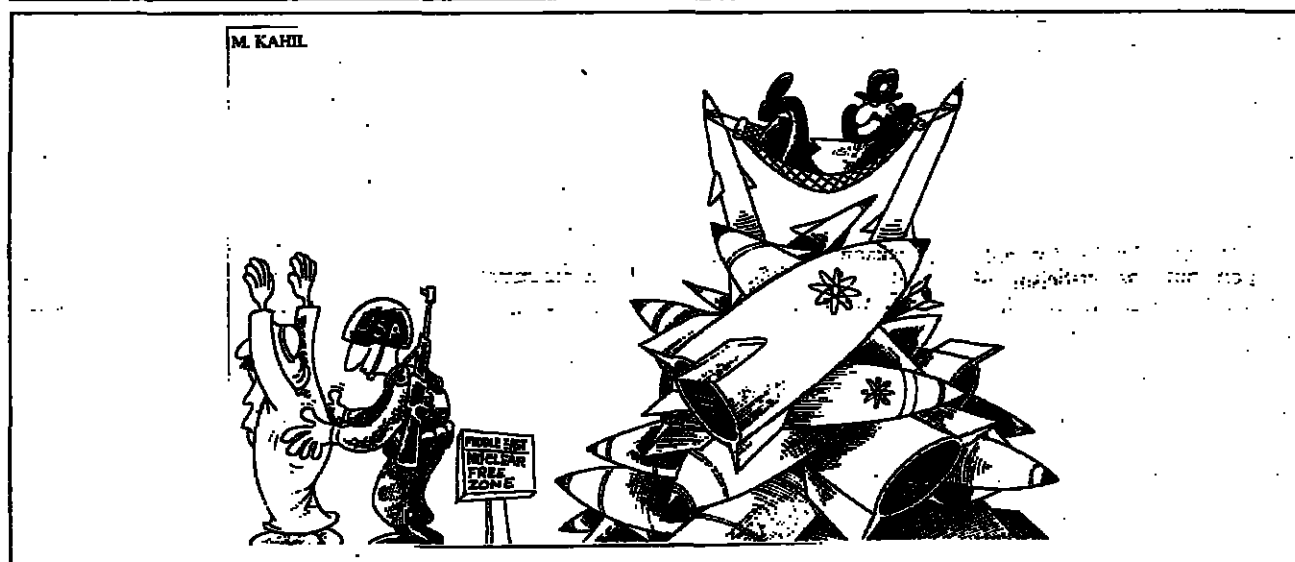
Coming to grips with reality

To the Editor:

THE POLEMIC between Messrs Khouri and Hourani seems to me to represent the schism between the West — in general — and the Arabs when it comes to the Palestine problem. While Mr. Khouri tries to delve into the causes of things, Mr. Hourani judges the effects on their own merits and does not like what he sees. But who does? Are we happy with what the long years of endurance and frustrations have done to us? How have they affected our feelings and psyche? Those who understand power politics overcome — or more correctly — work at overcoming — these undesirable effects and their frustrations, by resorting to pragmatism. They fully realise that their ordeal will not be understood, and have to find, and abide by, the formulae to coexist in the world of today.

"Exercise in casusistry" is better than no exercise at all. I appreciate the attempt by Mr. Khouri to come to grips with the "full underlying factors." It is a healthy direction for the benefit of all.

Lamia Nasser,
Amman.



Why the Council of Europe should put conglomerate Russia on hold

By Peter Smithers

VICO MORCOTE, Switzerland — Since the Council of Europe's creation in 1949, the feature that has set it apart from other intergovernmental organisations has been its insistence on respect for human rights and a democratic form of government as conditions for membership.

To such an extent was this the case that two member governments, Greece and Turkey, were obliged to withdraw from all or some of the activities of the council because their political systems and practices were for a time judged not to conform with these requirements.

The council is now confronted with Russia's desire to join.

Conglomerate states comprising diverse ethnic groups have proved to be no longer viable in modern conditions. The Belgian, British, Dutch, French and Portuguese colonial empires were such conglomerates. Smaller conglomerates such as Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia have proved unworkable. A powerful historical current is now flowing against the few remaining conglomerate states.

Everywhere in the world people are demanding the right to live under their own governments in circumstances of their own choosing. This is in accord with the principles that originally inspired the Council of Europe and that most certainly still hold.

The Russian empire of the czars, which was assumed and enlarged by the Soviet Union, was a colonial empire. It differed from others in two respects only: The subject ethnic

groups were contiguous and not separated by sea from the parent state, and the unity of the conglomerate was maintained by a brutal and ruthless use of force.

Today Russia stretches from the Baltic Sea to the Pacific Ocean and is still a conglomerate comprising many ethnic and national groups. Some of these peoples were originally subjugated by the czars. Both under the czars and under the Soviet Union, the Chechens were treated with barbarous cruelty. Under modern conditions, and in view of what is now happening in Chechnya, can the Russian conglomerate state be held together in its present form without the use of an unacceptable degree of force?

The current events in Chechnya make clear beyond doubt that some ethnic and cultural groups wish to enjoy the right to live under governments of their own choosing. A long history of brutal persecution has failed to extinguish this legitimate desire and has, on the contrary, made Chechens grimly determined to separate themselves from Russia.

The events in Chechnya will never be forgotten or forgiven by those who have suffered the death of friends and relatives and the destruction of homes and neighbourhoods at the hands of Moscow's troops. Inevitably this will strengthen their determination and unify them with the inhabitants of other regions.

The reckless destruction of civilian life and property in Chechnya far exceeds anything even remotely approaching the conditions that in Greece and Turkey were judged incompatible with full membership in the

Council of Europe. If the organisation is to retain any element of credibility as a defender of democracy and human rights, the following considerations should be conveyed to Russia:

1. No state that treats its subjects with the indiscriminate brutality used in Chechnya could be eligible to join the Council of Europe as a member state. The gross abuse of human rights and dignity is offensive to everything for which the council stands. Given the unstable state of Russian politics, assurances for the future cannot be taken at their face value. It is the council's plain duty to await their confirmation by events over a period of time.

2. On the other hand, the council should make clear that it would welcome the participation of the Russian government in its inter-governmental work. This would be a temporary measure until the situation in Russia is clarified and stabilised. Such participation can take place without full membership.

It would ill-serve Europe and Russia to seek to confuse or evade one of the clearest decisions of principle with which the organisation has ever been confronted.

Furthermore, there is no question of interference in the internal affairs of Russia. The Russian government must conduct its business as it thinks best. But the Council of Europe has an inescapable obligation to maintain the well-established conditions for membership and to make them clear to states applying for membership.

I am aware that several governments are of an opinion that in this instance

principle should be sacrificed to expediency. This is what happened at Munich many years ago. The argument is flawed even on grounds of expediency, for the Russian conglomerate state cannot be held together permanently by force. Such political systems are obsolete and unworkable.

The attempt to do so would result in disintegration in chaotic conditions. This would be extremely dangerous and costly in terms of human suffering. If such an attempt were to succeed, the world would be confronted with a giant military dictatorship. It was not for such a result that men fought and died in World War II.

But there is a policy that is in conformity with the principles of the Council of Europe and is also expedient: to encourage and assist Russia in the devolution of power to those ethnic regions that wish for this, including independence.

At the same time, every encouragement should be given to each ethnic region to establish and maintain close relations with Moscow. This would be of great benefit to both parties and is the only course of action that offers a hope of creating a stable situation.

The Council of Europe's members have much to offer in support of such a policy, and there is a good chance that it could be carried out. They should not be satisfied with anything else.

The writer was secretary-general of the Council of Europe from 1964 to 1969. This comment is reprinted from the Herald Tribune.

In the grip of 'Possession'

How do ideas take shape in an artist's mind? Why are some thoughts nurtured and others cast aside? Here, A S Byatt looks back on the long gestation of her Booker Prize-winning novel, *Possession*

THE BEGINNING of *Possession*, and the first choice was, most unusually for me, the title. I thought of it in the British Library, watching that great Coleridge scholar Kathleen Coburn circumambulating the catalogue. I thought: "She has given all her life to his thoughts," and then I thought: "Does he possess her, or does she possess him? There could be a novel called *Possession* about the relations between living and dead minds." This must have been in the late sixties. It was the time of the *nouveau roman*, of the novel as "text."

When I first recognise a thought as the germ of a story, I form a shape, or file, in a corner of my mind, to which I add things that seem to belong to it — quotations, observations. At that stage this Gestalt is more like the plan for a painting than a novel. It has colour and texture, though I have to think hard to call these to mind. The *ur Gestalt* of *Possession* was a grey cloudy web to do with the ghostliness and connectedness of the original idea. I think it was also to do with the *nouveau roman*, which I still visualise in that form. I imagined my text as a web of scholarly quotations and parodies through which the poems and writings of the dead should loom at the reader, to be surmised and guessed at.

The next decisive choices came in the 1980s when I was teaching Browning and George Eliot, and also lecturing on Henry James and his father, Henry James senior, a leading Swedenborgian. I had had the idea that the word possession involved both the demonic and the economic. Reading the Browning letters made me see that "possession" had a primary sexual connotation, too. I made a decision: there should be two couples, man and woman, one alive and one dead. The novel would concern the relations between these two pairs.

My grey cobwebby palimpsest changed colour.

It took on a lurid black, shot with crimson and scarlet, colours of passion. I was teaching that great novel, *The Bostonians*, with its world of witches, wizards, mediums, and spirit-rappers and roaring radicals to a generation of students involved in the politics of gender, who disliked James's tragicomic treatment of lesbian passion. It occurred to me that in the world of 19th-century spiritualism and feminism, possession had both its meanings at once.

So there was a need for the 19th-century woman to be a lesbian, or to be thought to be a lesbian, and the 20th-century woman scholar to be a feminist. What George Eliot's letters added to this texture of texts was the sense I always have that her real passionate self is splendidly absent from the letters kept by the people who kept them.

Her love-letters, unlike those of the Brownings, were buried with her. It is the lack of an unusually devoted marriage between poets once separated that we have the Browning letters. There have been serious proposals to dig up George Eliot. There is a gothic plot, I thought, of violence and skulduggery. The Gestalt got more lurid, purple, black, vermillion, with flying white forms.

I half-knew that the form of my novel should be a parody of every possible form, popular and "high culture", when I was asked to review Umberto Eco's *Reflections on the Name of the Rose*, which combines medieval theology, church history, gleefully bloodthirsty horrors, reflections on the form of the novel, with a hero who is an avatar or precursor of Sherlock Holmes. What entranced me about Eco's *Reflections* was his pleasure ("I wanted to murder a monk") and his technical reflections on the fact that detective stories and melodramas had to be written backwards. If you want to burn down a library quickly and irretrievably, you must make it burnable when you invent its architecture.

I had been thinking a lot about the pleasure principle in art. Art does not exist for politics or for instruction — it exists primarily for pleasure, or it is nothing. It can do the other things if it gives pleasure, as Coleridge knew. And the pleasure of fiction is narrative discovery, as it was easy to say about television serials and detective stories, but not, in those days, about serious novels.

So my novel should be a parody, not of Sherlock Holmes, but of the Margery Allingham detective stories I grew up on. It should learn from my childhood obsession, Georgette Heyer, to be a romance, and it could learn simultaneously from Hawthorne, Henry James's predecessor, that a historical romance is not realist, and desires to "connect a bygone time with the very present that is flitting away from us."

I added things: It should be an epistolary novel, which meant writing letters the scholars should find; it should contain early narrative forms (Victorian women writers wrote fairytales) and late ones (bits of biographies and critical "accounts" of what was going on). The Gestalt in my mind changed colour and form and became delicious, green and gold, the colours of Tennyson illustrations in my mind as a child, of dream landscapes, of childhood imaginings of a world brighter, more jewel-like than this one.

There was a huge problem. I knew modern forms were parodic — not only Eco but the criticism of Malcolm Bradbury had been pointing that out — parodic not in a sneering or mocking way, but as "re-writing" or "representing" the past. The structural necessity of my new form was that the poems of my two poets, the most important thing about them in my own view, should be in this no-longer ghostly text. And I am not a poet, and novelists who write poems usually come to grief. Robertson Davies, the Canadian novelist, had written a

novel with a parodic libretto to made up of the poems of Thomas Lovell Beddoes. I said to the poet DJ Enright I was contemplating using the early poems of Pound that look as though they could be by Browning, "Nonsense," he said. "Write your own."

So I tried. My mind has been full since childhood of the rhythms of Tennyson and Browning, Rossetti and Keats. I read and reread Emily Dickinson, whose harsher and more sceptical voice I found more exciting than Christina Rossetti's meekness. I wanted a fierce female voice. And I found I was possessed — it was actually quite frightening. The 19th-century poems that were not 19th-century poems wrote themselves. They fitted into the metaphorical structure of my novel, but were not mine, as my prose is mine.

There is one further late choice I should like to mention. There are three passages in the 19th-century narrative which are recounted by a Victorian "omniscient" third-person narrator. These three include the epilogue, and tell what might be thought of as the most important, beautiful and terrible moments in the lives of the Victorian characters.

I still receive angry letters from time to time from all over the world, saying these passages are a mistake — that I have cleverly told the story of the past through documents, diaries, letters and poems, and that I am breaking my own convention incompetently. But my decision was very deliberate.

It was partly polemical, for two reasons. I do believe that biographies are a kind of shadow-play, and that what really mattered is likely to elude the piecers-together of lives. (Doris Lessing endorses this view, mischievously, at the start of her autobiography). I also believe the third-person narrator has been much maligned in the recent past — it does not pretend to "God" — simply the narrative voice, which knows what it does know.



A STUDY IN GREEN AND GOLD AND BLUE: The Beguiling of Merlin (1870) by Sir Edward Burne-Jones

And I wanted to show that such a voice can bring the reader nearer the passions and the thoughts of characters, without any obligation to admire the cleverness of the novelist. There is a nice

irony about this — the writer and reader share what critics and scholars can't discover.

And the Gestalt now? A green and gold and blue balloon, far away, untouched.

A writer can't think about novels that have gone away. The Gestalt of the one I am writing, about the 1960s, is a jagged harlequin pattern of coloured fragments and smoking bon-

fires. And there is something weak about the narrative line, or tension, connecting these, that I'm trying to deal with.

The Independent

Majority of Jordanians favour unity

(Continued from page 1)

could prevent the integration of both segments of society. It said that 68.7 per cent of the national sample, 56.4 per cent of the opinion leaders sample and 65.9 per cent of the camp sample believe that a "great degree of integration" has been reached in society.

The poll said that a study of the polarisation factors as far as East Bankers are concerned are:

- The concentration of private sector ownership in the hands of West Bankers;
- East Bankers' fears about the growing number of Jordanians of Palestinian origin;
- The dual loyalty of Jordanians of Palestinian origin (to Jordan and Palestine);
- And the lack of appreciation among Jordanians of Palestinian origins of the gains they made in the Kingdom.

As for polarisation factors for West Bankers, the poll listed the following:

- The concentration of public sector appointments in East Bankers;
- The disproportionate representation of West Bankers in government and Parliament;
- Keeping sensitive positions in the hands of East Bankers;
- And the government's favouritism of East Bankers in the various fields.

The poll, which was carried out by 60 students and analysed by a group of political scientists and sociologists and other professionals at the University of Jordan, noted that opinion leaders were more willing to acknowledge these polarisation factors; 43.6 per cent to 58.8 per cent of them recognised these fac-

tors compared to 29.9 per cent to 44.5 per cent in the national sample and 20.8 to 57.7 per cent in the camp sample.

For example, 66 per cent of East Bank opinion leaders said that an obstacle to national unity is the "dual loyalty among Jordanians of Palestinian origin," while 40.9 per cent of West Bankers agreed with them.

In the national sample, 35.4 per cent of Jordanians of East Bank origin acknowledged this factor compared to 24.7 per cent among West Bankers and 22.2 per cent among refugee camps residents.

"Concerning the West Bankers' belief that the concentration of sensitive government jobs among East Bankers is a polarisation factor, 74.1 per cent of West Bankers in the opinion leader sample agreed with this analysis compared to 43.9 per cent among East Bankers in the same sample; 33.3 per cent of East Bankers in the national sample consider this factor a polarisation one, compared to 55.2 per cent among West Bankers. The percentage in the camp sample was 51.6 per cent.

More than one-fifth — 22.6 per cent — of people surveyed in the national sample, 74.4 per cent in the opinion leader sample and 20.1 per cent in the camp sample said the relationship between the Kingdom and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was marked by lack of confidence and enmity.

Twenty-five per cent of East Bankers and 18 per cent of West Bankers said the relationship is marked by lack of confidence compared to 73 per cent of East Bankers and 68 per cent of the West Bank-

ers in the opinion leader sample. The camp sample was the least to agree on this conclusion with only 19.7 per cent reporting it.

The poll said that 61.3 per cent of the persons surveyed in the national sample, 84.2 per cent of those in the opinion leaders sample and 58.1 per cent of refugee camp residents demanded that Jordan and the PLO improve their relations.

These percentages break down into 56.3 per cent among East Bankers and 66.2 per cent among West Bankers in the national sample, 83 per cent among East Bankers and 85.4 per cent among West Bankers in the opinion leader sample.

The poll shows that the percentage of those who did not want improved ties was higher among East Bankers in both samples, though it was low, reaching only 31.4 per cent in the national sample and 12.6 per cent in the opinion leader sample.

Among West Bankers, 19.5 per cent in the national sample did not want improved relations nor did 8.9 per cent among opinion leaders.

The poll said that the majority of the people surveyed believe the PLO should "show good will (towards the PLO), seek coordination with the government and pursue unity" with Jordan in order to improve its ties with the Kingdom.

The majority of the people surveyed said the Kingdom should "show good will (towards the PLO), seek coordination with the PLO and support it" in order to have better PLO-Jordan ties.

The poll shows that the majority of the persons said that it is the PLO and not Jordan which should take

these measures to improve the relations between the two sides.

The poll said there is a dominant belief that the agreements the PLO has reached with Israel will have more positive than negative effects on Jordan. But it said the opinion leaders "were more convinced of the negative effects than those in the national sample."

The negative effect, said the poll, will be on the economic field and on Jordan's negotiating position with Israel, while the positive impact will be in enabling the Kingdom to proceed with these negotiations as a result of the environment "of security and stability which will prevail."

The poll reported limited optimism that the Palestinian-Israeli talks will result in the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.

The percentage of those who believed the negotiations will lead to the creation of an independent state ranged between 16.1 per cent in the camp sample to 19 per cent in the national sample and 16.2 per cent in the opinion leader sample.

This view was expressed by 18.1 per cent of East Bankers and 20 per cent of West Bankers in the national category, compared to 17 per cent among East Bankers and 15.4 per cent among West Bankers in the opinion leader sample.

Dr. Hamarneh said the poll provides a "wealth of information that could lay the ground for an objective and systematic analysis of the relations among East and West Bankers in the Kingdom."

The purpose of the poll, said an introductory note to it, is to assess how East and West Bankers in Jordan see their relationship and to de-

scribe the "suspicions, fears and obstacles" that could prevent the integration of the two segments of society.

Informed sources said the centre, which is the first academic institution to study the political situation in the Kingdom and provide data on it, is planning to bring together a group of individuals "who have contributed to the debate about Jordanian-Palestinian relations" in an effort to further study the relations between East and West Bankers in the Kingdom.

Brown: U.S. is committed

(Continued from page 12)

Palestinian delegate to the talks Nabil Shaath told Reuters. He said the Palestinians would also seek direct trade access with Jordan and Egypt to reduce dependence on Israel.

The two-day meeting, in the Red Sea resort of Tabá and headed by Mr. Brown, aims to boost trade between Egypt, Jordan, the Palestinians and Israel.

The Commerce Department in Washington said the aim of Mr. Brown's current Middle East tour was to promote trade and investment.

"Our goals of economic cooperation and trade development are integral to that (the peace) process," Mr. Brown said in Cairo on Sunday. "To build lasting peace and stability, we must ensure the region has strong economic foundations."

Dr. Shaath, in charge of planning and international cooperation in the Palestinian self-rule authority, said: "We would like to use the opportunity of this conference to open up trade opportunities and (get) preferential treatment to Palestinian products in an effort to focus on trade more than on aid which has not been forthcoming easily until now."

Dr. Shaath said the Palestinians would demand direct trade access with Egypt and Jordan to ease burdens caused by Israeli closures of Palestinian territory every time militants opposed to peace carry out attacks against Israeli targets.

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation, particularly in setting up industrial zones not only with Israel but also with Egypt and Jordan.

Dr. Shaath said U.S. and Israeli calls for an end to Arab economic boycott of Israel "must be corrected to ask for the end of Israeli boycott and closure of the Palestinian territory."

PNA police arrest dozens

(Continued from page 1)

ance Movement Hamas and Islamic Jihad men, the officials said.

All three groups oppose the Israeli-PLO peace deal. "We have already taken major steps last night, yesterday, two days ago and we will continue. We will not permit these groups to harm, not only the Israelis, but also the Palestinians and the peace process," Mr. Arafat told reporters.

"We will continue in our way to deal and to face all these fanatic and extremist forces and we will not allow them to continue in these activities. But I haven't a magic stick. But I do my best," he said.

Mr. Arafat has been under mounting pressure from Israel to arrest Palestinian hardliners. Israeli leaders have complained that Mr. Arafat's security forces have not done enough to foil attacks on Israelis.

Nihad Abul Ghosh, a leading DFLP member, said the arrest sweep began at dawn when police rounded up 35 activists out of 70 they were looking for. Police picked up 10 more at the DFLP office in Gaza City around noon and took them by bus to jail.

Mr. Abul Ghosh said many DFLP activists have gone into hiding.

Arabs, Israel, U.S. open talks

(Continued from page 1)

begin on Wednesday. Secretary General of Ministry of Industry and Trade Mohammad Smadi said: "We have come with a lot of goodwill because we believe that the people of the Middle East must rapidly see the concrete effects of peace in their daily lives."

The Jordanian delegation had brought plans for a major road project, but would not reveal details, agencies reported.

Israeli Trade Minister Micha Harish said that the meeting was a "logical follow-up to the 60-nation Middle East economic summit in Casablanca last November."

The Palestinian delegation chief, Planning and Cooperation Minister Nabil Shaath said they hoped to negotiate a free trade with the United States (see page 12).

The Egyptian delegation was led by Trade Minister Mahmoud Mohammad Mahmoud and included industrial chiefs.

Envoy leaves for Riyadh today

(Continued from page 1)

mises. The visit was described as positive towards better Jordanian-Kuwaiti relations.

In the meantime, many Jordanians who were forced to return home in the wake of the Gulf crisis say that they were contacted by

GCC oil earnings stabilise since Gulf war

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf oil earnings have been more stable since the end of the 1991 war against Iraq because of less price fluctuation and fewer quota violations, official Gulf figures show.

The revenues of the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states have ranged between \$66 billion and \$77 billion a year since 1991 compared with a much larger gap during the 1980s, according to the figures.

They stood at \$70 billion in 1994 compared with \$74.2 billion in 1993, \$77 billion in 1992 and \$66.4 billion in 1991.

The figures were compiled from recent reports of the state-run Emirates Industrial Bank, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) planning ministry and central bank, the Saudi Monetary Agency and other official sources in the region.

The relative stability in earnings contrasts with sharp fluctuations during the 1980s. Revenues topped \$180 billion in 1981 before they plummeted to around \$45 billion in 1985 and as low as \$34.2 billion in 1986.

They stood at \$46.8 billion in 1987, \$43.6 billion in 1988 and \$52 billion in 1989. In 1990, they jumped to \$71 billion as prices shot to nearly \$40 just after the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and some member states hiked output to make up for a loss of around four million barrels per day (b/d) due to a halt in Iraqi and Kuwaiti crude exports.

"The period after the Gulf war is quite different from that before the war," a Gulf-based oil executive said. "Prices were sharply changing before the war because several OPEC producers

were exceeding their output quotas while now most of them have no room for violation as they are producing near capacity."

Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil producer and exporter, is the only member of the 12-nation Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) with a large extra output capacity. At the end of 1994, capacity stood at around 9.5 million b/d compared with the kingdom's OPEC quota of eight million b/d.

Apart from prices, production by GCC states was also unstable. From a record 12 million b/d in 1980, Saudi output plunged to around five million b/d six years later before it boosted production to eight million b/d in 1990 to reverse the sharp rise in crude prices after the invasion of Kuwait.

The UAE produced an

average one million b/d in the early 1980s as it was a relatively newcomer to the oil scene. New major discoveries and capacity expansions enabled it to raise production to 1.5 million b/d in the mid-1980s and around 2.16 million b/d currently.

The six GCC members, sitting atop 45 per cent of the world's proven oil reserves, were behind OPEC's recent policy of fixing its official output ceiling for a whole year to guarantee stability in the market.

"With such a new policy, Gulf states expect oil prices to stabilise at their current prices or slightly higher in the next few years barring unexpected developments," said a source close to the GCC oil industry. "This, in turn will help stabilise their budgets as it will be less difficult for them to calculate their oil earnings."

Oil prices averaged around \$15.90 in 1994 compared with \$16.33 in 1993 and \$18.44 in 1992. In 1980, they jumped to more than \$50 then dived to below \$10 in 1986 due to a price war among producers.

A breakdown showed the oil income has nearly stabilised in each GCC member, except Kuwait whose energy sector was damaged by the Iraqi invasion.

Saudi Arabia's income stood at around \$47 billion in 1994 compared with \$43.5 billion in 1993, \$47.5 billion in 1992 and \$43.6 billion in 1991.

The UAE's revenues were estimated at nearly \$12.2 billion in 1994, at \$12.5 billion in 1993, and at \$14.4 billion in 1992. Oman and Qatar incomes ranged between \$4 billion and \$5 billion and between \$2 billion and \$3 billion respectively.

OPEC benefits little from oil demand surge

LONDON (R) — The world's seemingly unquenchable thirst for oil will continue in 1995 but OPEC members are unlikely as alternative suppliers continue to snatch the lion's share of this growth in demand, analysts say.

Global oil demand is expected to surge by one million barrels per day (b/d) this year, matching the steep growth in 1994, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said Tuesday.

But while OPEC is expected to hold its production at 24.52 million b/d until the end of the year as agreed last November, non-OPEC supplies are forecast to climb by 700,000 b/d, diminishing OPEC's role in balancing world oil supplies.

Finnish recovery seen accelerating but debt stays drag on economy

PARIS (AFP) — Finland's recovery from its deepest post-war recession now seems set to pick up momentum, but further cutting of its public deficits and debt will be essential to keep inflation down and maintain market confidence in the market, the OECD said Tuesday.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) projected the Finnish economy to grow by 4.8 per cent this year — the highest rate in the OECD area next Ireland's — and by about 4.0 per cent in 1996, helped by improved confidence linked with Finnish entry into the European Union.

Finnish GDP was estimated to have grown by 3.5 per cent in 1994, mainly thanks to the export boom that turned the economy around after three years of deep contraction, which reduced real GDP by nearly 15 per cent from 1990.

In a review of the Finnish economy, the OECD recalled that Finland was plunged into recession by a combination of severe domestic and external shocks: The bursting of the credit "bubble" of the 1980s triggered sharp private sector balance-sheet adjustments and a banking crisis, which coincided with the world recession and the collapse of Finland's trade with the former Soviet Union.

The export boom, fanned by a major depreciation of the markka in 1992, now seems set to taper off, but with the balance sheet adjustment more or less completed, the OECD foresees a pickup in double-digit growth in private sector investment.

It said inflation was likely to remain subdued in line with the official target level of 2.0 per cent a year, while the unemployment rate, which peaked at 19 per cent a year ago, could narrow to 14 per cent by the end of next year as labour force growth remains weak.

The OECD also expects a further modest rise in Finland's current account surplus, which was up to an estimated 2.0 per cent of GDP last year.

It said these projections implied a reduction in public spending in line with the targets set in the 1995 budget proposal, and a narrowing of long-term interest differentials with German rates — which would require continued low inflation.

However, the OECD said, it was still uncertain whether the revival of domestic demand would be strong enough to maintain output growth at projected levels.

It conceded there was "concern" that a sharper rise in Finnish long-term rates than in those of many other OECD countries might harm the budding recovery in investments.

The OECD also cautioned that improved job prospects in the dynamics export industries might trigger wage pressures that could spill over to the rest of the economy via collective wage bargaining, resulting in stronger than expected inflation.

Against this background, the report said, "with the economy gathering momentum, the priority for policymakers should be to strengthen fiscal discipline in order to consolidate the budget."

Clinton proposes largely unchanged foreign affairs budget, \$246b for defence

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bill Clinton sent Congress a \$21.2 billion foreign affairs budget Monday that would maintain most spending levels and ending what the State Department calls a "debilitating decline" in U.S. aid over the last decade.

The budget, expected to be a high-profile but not very lucrative target for Republican budget cutters, represents little more than one per cent of total federal spending. Mr. Clinton's entire budget package introduced Monday calls for spending \$1.61 trillion in the fiscal year starting next October. It includes drastic cutbacks elsewhere, combined with a middle-class tax cut.

"By any measure, the resources we are requesting are the bare minimum we need to defend America's vital interests," Secretary of State Warren Christopher said in his budget commentary. He noted that international affairs spending, including foreign aid, has dropped 45 per cent in real dollars since 1984.

The budget "ends this debilitating decline," said a fact sheet on the request.

"Last November's elections certainly changed many things," Mr. Christopher said at a briefing on the budget request. "But they were not a licence to lose sight of our global interests or to walk away from our commitments around the world."

Republicans who swept to victory in both chambers of the U.S. Congress already have taken broadsides at the foreign aid budget and at the Clinton administration's foreign policy in general.

Without American leadership, Mr. Christopher asserted, there would be four nuclear states in the former Soviet Union instead of one, a full-throated nuclear programme would be thriving in North Korea, Haiti would still be ruled by a dictator, Iraqi troops likely would be back in Kuwait and there would be no world or North American trade agreements.

Overall, Mr. Clinton's request represents a decline of \$81 million from last year's budget, a drop of less than one-half of one per cent. About \$9.1 billion of the total request would go for international development and humanitarian aid.

The president's fiscal 1996 budget includes:

- \$5.3 billion to support Middle East peace, mostly in maintaining past aid levels to Israel and Egypt.
- \$4.5 billion to support operation of the State Department and U.S. diplomatic missions around the world.
- \$3.9 billion supporting economic growth and stability and economic reform in Asia, Latin America and Africa.
- \$1.7 billion to assist refugees and disaster victims.
- \$1.5 billion to promote market reforms and democracy in the former Soviet Union and central Europe.
- \$1 billion for global environmental and population programmes.
- \$900 million for programmes that promote U.S. exports, promoted as a means of creating American jobs.
- \$545 million for interna-

tional peacekeeping.

- \$240 million for measures against terrorism, illegal narcotics and crime.
- \$170 million to work against nuclear proliferation.

Senator Mitch McConnell, the new Republican head of the Senate subcommittee overseeing appropriations for foreign operations, wants to cut foreign aid by 20 per cent.

Senator Jesse Helms, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, is also expected to seek cuts, although spending is not controlled by his committee. He wants to cut half the aid — or \$3.5 billion — that would go to countries other than Israel and Egypt.

Central goals of the Clinton budget continue to be building democracy, advancing diplomacy and promoting sustainable development, peace and prosperity, Mr. Christopher said.

He said the State Department has begun streamlining its operations by closing 17 foreign posts in the last year. The U.S. Agency for International Development has closed five overseas missions and will close 16 more by the end of the next fiscal year, he said.

Elsewhere in the budget, Mr. Clinton calls for 1,000 new border patrol agents to deal with politically delicate illegal immigration. To cover costs, he proposes a new \$3 per car and \$1.50 per individual crossing fee at U.S. borders with Mexico and Canada.

The White House is asking Congress to approve \$246 billion for the U.S. Department of Defence in the next fiscal year.

Turkey to benefit from EU customs union — analysts

ISTANBUL (R) — Pending customs union with the European Union (EU), back on track after months of doubt, will fortify Turkey's sagging economy and could accelerate needed social reform, economic analysts said Tuesday.

"In the long-run this will help the Turkish economy by making everyone more competitive and in the short-run this will be very good for certain sectors," said a London-based fund manager with holdings in Turkey.

The deal, which will lift trade barriers between Turkey and the Union, is expected to be approved next month. EU ministers said in Brussels Monday.

The plan was put in doubt last December when Greece vetoed the deal, but Athens was apparently pacified with a promise talks would start after 1996 on allowing Cyprus — a third of which is occupied by Turkish troops — into the union.

The EU is Turkey's biggest trading partner, accounting for roughly 45 per cent of imports and exports, and Turkish industry hopes the new deal will give it better access to the 350 million people in the union.

"The union will also be a benefit for EU companies, which will have high growth potential in the low-saturated Turkish market," said Enis Gonen, secretary general of the Economic Development Fund in Istanbul.

"We also can expect a deepened integration with the European Union companies through more joint ventures and more franchises," said Mr. Gonen, whose

group is studying the potential effects of the union.

Analysts said the customs union would give a sure boost to those Turkish industries reliant on domestic raw materials and low-cost labour.

The textiles, glass and ceramics industries — already strong exporters — are expected to do even better with the fall of barriers.

"We are a strong industry and we are already competitive, so we have always been the strongest supporters of the customs union," said Emine Aclan, an official with the Union of Textile Exporters.

But consumer durables and cars may be hit hard by the lifting tariffs, which have protected such sectors from competition.

"You won't see a total collapse of these companies, but it's going to make it a lot cheaper (than it is now) to buy a BMW or a German refrigerator," said the London-based analyst.

The union, which if approved would take effect at the start of 1996, could also speed overhaul of Turkey's troubled economy by forcing companies to trim waste and encouraging investment to boost competitiveness, analysts said.

Local companies, no longer protected by high tariffs, will have to streamline in order to compete. Exporters, freed from quotas, will be able to expand as much as the market can bear.

As important as the economic gains, analysts said, the expected customs union should give a needed boost to Turkey's social transformation.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 8, 1995
By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) A fine day to get busy making improvements to your surroundings. Get the car cleaned and in good running order, clothing cleaned, etc.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Take the time this morning to visit the barber or beauty shop so that you are at best for meeting others for any creative expressions.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Thoughts of home and family should be uppermost in your mind now, although you may find it necessary to be in the world of business for your success.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 22) Don't waste a moment of this day's fine aspects in making and keeping business appointments, getting shopping done, buying and selling, too.

LEO: (July 23 to August 22) You must make a good impression upon higher-ups and kin where the handling of finance is concerned today no matter what your position or profession in life may be.

VIRGO: (August 23 to September 22) Start today to take those health and beauty treatments you've wanted to, so that you will be your best and then can keep those important appointments which are so special to you.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Since you want things to be in order and fine condition, this is a good day to absent yourself from the social world and carry on earnestly with tasks in mind.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Be sure to listen attentively to the suggestions now being given you by well informed acquaintances. They will quickly bring your personal and business goals closer.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) If you are most conscientious in handling any civic or business affairs, you can now increase your prestige appreciably. This evening is good for private, intimate meetings.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Search through your paper and every other available source for the information you require that will help you start an upswing in all of your business affairs.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Start today to look for more efficient systems for operating and keeping books so that you can make a greater profit. Have details of taxes, insurance, accounts at your finger tips.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Your partners have the planetary forces on their side today so be sure to ally yourself with them fully in order to gain benefits.

Birthstone of February: Amethyst — Onyx

Peanuts



Andy Capp



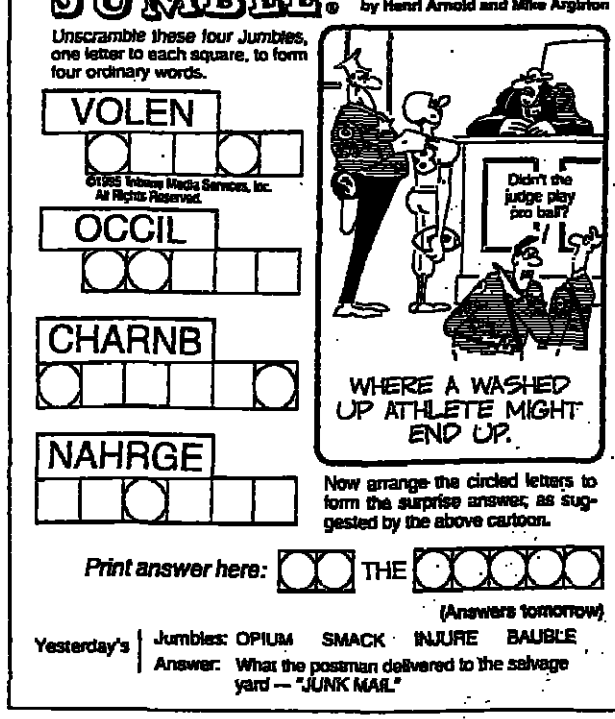
Mutt'n'Jeff



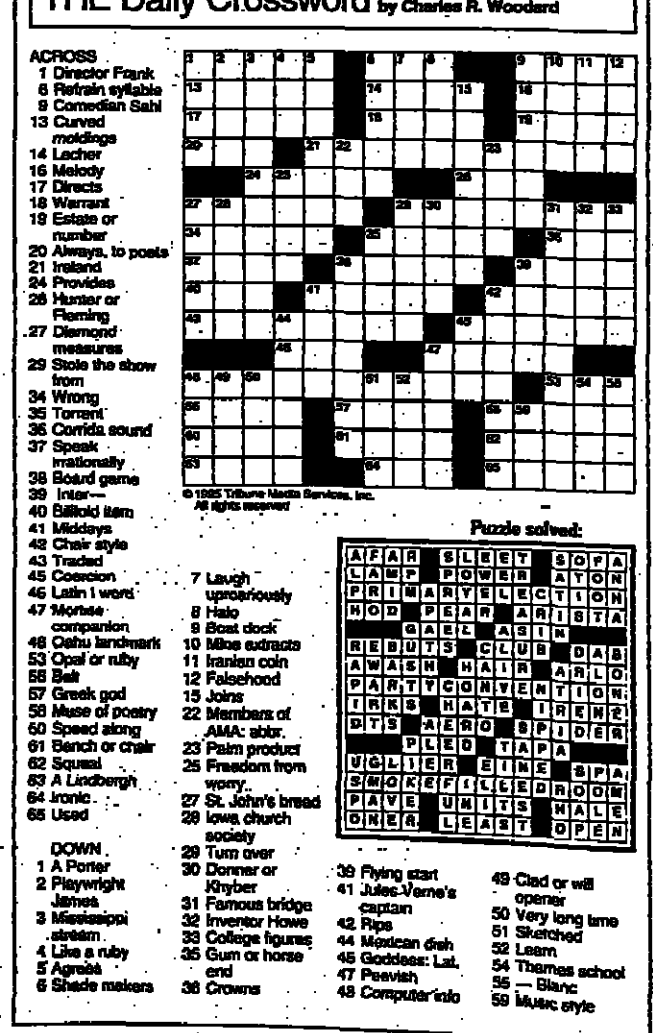
THE BETTER HALF



JUMBLE



THE Daily Crossword



business
daily
beat

A review
of economic news
from the Arabic press

Violators of labour law pay JD1m in fines

★ The inspection directorate at the Ministry of Labour has fined 20,338 institutions JD 1,058,928 for labour violations last year. The directorate supervises 86,211 institutions employing 276,512 Jordanians and 106,503 non-Jordanians. The directorate received 2,541 labour complaints last year and managed to solve 2,092 cases amicably (Al Dustour).

★ The Ministry of Health is expected to float tenders for contracts estimated to cost JD5.5 million this year. The tenders will be to expand or set up various hospitals throughout the Kingdom (Al Ra'i).

★ The Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) has started implementing the first of two projects to provide 41,000 telephone lines to Zarqa governorate by 1997 at a cost of JD 25.5 million. The first project, costing JD 17 million, will provide 20,000 telephone lines to northern Zarqa (Zarqa Al Jadidah) Awajan, Al Azraq, Al Sukhneh, Al Hallabat, Al Masarra and Al Omari. The second project, which has not started yet, will provide 21,000 telephone lines at a cost of JD 8.5 million to residents of Russeifah and Musherfeh. There are 31,384 telephone lines in Zarqa, of which 1,458 are open for subscription (Al Ra'i).

★ A new public shareholding company, Al Iqbal Company for Printing and Packaging, is offering two million shares (worth JD2 million) for public subscription. The company, which was registered at the Ministry of Industry and Trade on Dec. 27, 1994, has a total capital of JD6 million and aims at setting up and operating a commercial printing press and packaging plant. Key founders of the company who paid JD6 million of the capital are: The Bank of Jordan (JD 400,000); Tawfik Fakhaury, chairman of the bank, (JD 400,000); Al Saeed Company for Trade and Development (JD 400,000) and the International Cigarettes and Tobacco Company (JD 200,000); Dr. Ashraf Al Kurdi (JD 150,000) and Mr. Samir Theeb Anis Isa (JD 150,000) (Al Ra'i).

★ According to an agreement signed recently with the Ministry of water and Irrigation, the U.S. company Ecology Environment will be carrying out a feasibility study for developing the Jordan Valley. The U.S. company was chosen from among five international firms at the recommendation of the Ministry of Planning after it won the highest points (Al Dustour).

★ A committee from the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the Ministry of Planning, the Jordan Export Development and Commercial Centres Corporation, the Amman Chamber of Industry and the Federation of Chambers of Commerce is studying the possibility of establishing of a permanent international fair in Amman similar to those in Syria and Egypt. A decision has not yet been taken on whether to expand the current grounds of the Amman International Fair or to set up a new one. The preliminary cost of a new one is estimated at JD 15 million. At present the Amman International fair has only 5,000 square metres whereas the land around it is 466,000 square metres in area (Al Dustour).

★ Obtaining a telephone line in the Abdali area of Amman will not be a problem within the coming three months as more than 12,000 new telephone lines will be available to the exchange (Al Dustour).

U.S. seeks to boost exports to Arab Gulf states

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AFP) — U.S. Commerce Secretary Ron Brown will visit the Gulf Wednesday to discuss reviving flagging U.S. exports to the lucrative market and seek more business opportunities.

After visiting Israel and Jordan, Mr. Brown will arrive Wednesday in Kuwait, where U.S. companies are seeking opportunities in the

fields of telecommunications, housing and electricity. "A U.S. official in the emirate said.

The commerce secretary, who is to visit Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Thursday, is accompanied by the heads of 10 key U.S. firms which are either already doing business in the region or eyeing new contracts.

They include Newport News Shipbuilding (NNS), which won a deal in December to build a shipyard in the UAE.

"NNS is currently marketing a state-of-the-art frigate to several countries in the Middle East and is among the final competitors to build up to six frigates for the UAE, a project that could be worth more than \$1 billion," a U.S. embassy statement said.

Another firm is Oshkosh Truck Corporation, which has made considerable investments in marketing in the UAE, Kuwait and Egypt.

Oshkosh estimated sales potential in the UAE at around \$300 million and said it would seek large sales of heavy duty tactical trucks in the UAE and Kuwait during Mr. Brown's visit, according to the U.S. embassy in Abu Dhabi.

"Oshkosh also hopes to look into substantial opportunities for commercial airport rescue and fire fighting vehicles, construction and defence trucks," the embassy said.

Mr. Brown's delegation includes Bruce Cole, president of Stone and Webster Inc., which is seeking construction opportunities in the region.

U.S. embassy officials said the company was bidding for projects in the UAE, Kuwait and Qatar. They said the projects, involving gas and refinery expansions, would be awarded this year.

A company statement said the mission would provide an opportunity to talk with policy and decision makers "to demonstrate Stone and Webster's interest and commitment to the countries and clients being visited."

The statement gave no details of the projects but the UAE invited bids for doubling the output capacity of its key oil refinery at Ruwais from around 130,000 barrels per day. It also plans to set up a domestic gas-network as the Gulf nation is gradually

switching from oil to gas, a cleaner source of energy.

Qatar has also embarked on one of the biggest liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects in the world to tap its giant North gas field. The U.S. company Mobil is involved in one of the project that will eventually produce more than 10 million tonnes per year.

Another company, Occidental Petroleum Corporation, one of the biggest oil firms in the world, has also set its eyes on the region's energy industry.

The U.S. embassy quoted the company as saying it hoped during this visit to encourage foreign governments to "offer opportunities for oil and gas exploration and enhanced oil recovery projects."

Embassy officials said Mr. Brown would also hold talks on bolstering commercial links when he arrives for his first visit to the UAE Thursday.

IBJ says yen isolated by growing influence of dollar and mark

TOKYO (AFP) — The yen is becoming increasingly isolated from other currencies as the global marketplace heads for a bipolar system dominated by the dollar and the mark, according to the Industrial Bank of Japan Ltd. (IBJ).

By tracing the fluctuations of 18 major currencies over a 10-year period between 1985 and 1994, the bank found that Asian currencies, the Australian dollar and the Canadian dollar developed stronger links with the U.S. dollar.

During the same period, European currencies had become more strongly linked to the German mark, a study by the bank showed.

The study, contained in a new book entitled: "What will become of the Japanese economy in 1995," said the yen has become a "great local currency," despite the Bank

of Japan's efforts to globalise the unit.

"It is unrealistic to think of Asia as being a yen economic zone," IBJ said, warning that Japanese companies moving production to the region would have to take further measures to minimise foreign exchange risks.

The study argued that because of its isolation, the stability of the yen was becoming a matter of concern only for Japan.

"Concerted actions to halt the yen's appreciation are less likely to be on the agenda of Group of Seven summit meetings," the bank said.

On the other hand, the Japanese unit's isolation has also made the currency less susceptible to turmoil in international financial markets, the study said, noting that the Mexican peso's recent plunge had little impact on the yen.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET					
BANKING SECTOR					
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 07/02/1995					
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE TRADED JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	NEW CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE
JORDAN BANK	100	18480	184.800	184.800	
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	2100	11205	5.310	5.310	
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK / NEW	3123	12487	4.000	4.000	
KIDDAH BANK INVESTMENT BANK	1020	1475	1.470	1.440	-0.030
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	2551	6817	2.740	2.450	-0.290
THE HOUSING BANK	3300	19635	5.950	5.950	
JORDAN KIDDAH BANK	457	1348	2.970	2.950	-0.020
JORDAN GULF BANK	8900	12300	1.420	1.370	-0.050
JORDAN ATLANTIC BANK	3708	13708	3.710	3.700	-0.010
BUSINESS BANK	4000	13990	3.500	3.480	-0.020
BETT KHALIL SAVING & INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	1250	3875	3.120	3.100	-0.020
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	9950	12736	1.300	1.280	-0.020
JORDAN BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	850	2283	4.150	4.150	
PELADIA INVESTMENT BANK	6000	8392	1.440	1.390	-0.050
BANKS SECTOR	47856	138904	INDEX NUMBER: 157.04	CHANGE: -0.38	
JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE					
	500	1145	2.290	2.290	
INSURANCE SECTOR					
	500	1145	INDEX NUMBER: 135.55	CHANGE: -0.28	
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER					
	3661	5675	1.480	1.470	-0.010
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER / NEW	14975	20541	1.380	1.370	-0.010
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	2512	11630	4.750	4.650	-0.100
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	4850	9706	2.200	2.110	-0.090
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COMMERCE HOTELS	2650	5994	2.310	2.270	-0.040
ARAB LEXTER FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	2700	9712	3.600	3.600	
SERVICES SECTOR	31248	63268	INDEX NUMBER: 129.00	CHANGE: -0.81	
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES					
	19900	58702	2.950	2.950	
THE ARAB PETROL/NEW	100	505	5.100	5.100	
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	35	329	9.400	9.400	
THE JORDAN WORSTED MILLS	750	5588	7.550	7.450	-0.100
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	8679	36073	4.200	4.060	-0.140
JORDAN PRINTING & PACKING	100	900	9.000	9.000	
SPINNING & WEAVING	4550	11569	2.530	2.540	0.010
RAPIA INDUSTRIES	650	1775	2.730	2.730	
DAN AL DANA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	3670	36268	7.450	7.760	0.310
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	1390	1250	0.950	0.920	-0.030
ARAB ALUMINIUM INDUSTRY	600	4058	6.770	6.770	
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	14750	11177	0.760	0.750	-0.010
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	1250	2063	2.500	2.370	-0.130
ALADIN INDUSTRIES	1100	4620	4.200	4.200	
ARAB CENTER FOR PERUM. & CHEMICALS	2625	6693	2.600	2.550	-0.050
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	525	2082	4.000	3.990	-0.010
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	4400	8372	1.950	1.900	-0.050
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	66034	191536	INDEX NUMBER: 122.36	CHANGE: -0.46	
GRAND TOTAL	145438	394854	INDEX NUMBER: 140.62	CHANGE: -0.45	
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET: 153356					
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET: 156957					

Financial Markets

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U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close Date: 7/2/95	Tokyo Close Date: 7/2/95
Sterling Pound*	1.5680	1.5593**
Deutsche Mark	1.5314	1.5256
Swiss Franc	1.2946	1.2950**
French Franc	5.3005	5.2970**
Japanese Yen	99.45	99.80
European Currency Unit	1.5320	1.5355**

* US\$ per STG

** European Sterling £ 250 a.m. (GMT)

Eurocurrency Interest Rates

Date: 7/2/1995

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTH	6 MTH	12 MTH
U.S. Dollar	5.81	6.00	6.31	6.62
Sterling Pound	6.37	6.56	6.87	7.31
Deutsche Mark	4.75	4.81	5.06	5.50
Swiss Franc	5.37	5.62	5.93	6.25
French Franc	5.51	5.56	5.87	6.37
Japanese Yen	7.06	7.12	7.18	7.31
European Currency Unit	5.68	5.94	6.25	6.65

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.

U.S. \$1.00 costs		Canadian dollar
1.3972/82		Deutschemarks
1.5324/34		Dutch guilders
1.7174/84		Swiss francs
1.2974/84		Belgian francs
31.51/55		French francs
5.3020/70		Italian lire
1612.0/3.0		Japanese yen
99.24/34		Swedish crowns
7.4325/25		Norwegian crowns
6.7010/60		Danish crowns
6.0273/23		
\$1.5570/80		
One sterling	\$375.10/375.60	
One ounce of gold		

Raw material prices find a fragile floor after fund exodus

LONDON (R) — Bargain hunters restored a fragile stability to shocked world commodity markets Tuesday after a sell-off by speculators and investment funds.

But expert opinion was divided on whether the past 15 months' inflationary "bull run" in raw materials might resume.

An exodus of the fund money that had earlier fuelled the commodity boom sent prices tumbling Monday on everything from copper through sugar to crude oil.

One view now is that supply and demand are still in a tight enough balance to support a gradual return to stronger prices, particularly in the key base-metal sector.

Selling there was taken the flagship, copper, down by almost 10 per cent from a 54-year high hit in mid-January.

Yesterday was black Monday for base-metal prices, said brokerage Macquarie Equities.

But it adds that consumer buying of the kind that helped prices Tuesday is likely to stabilise markets "after the current surge of fund selling dissipates."

A contrary view is that supply/demand fundamentals will not alone buoy up commodities if the fund managers just decide — as some did this week — that revived bond and equity markets are now a better place to put their money.

"It will be a difficult thing to repair the damage," said Cliff Green of Trend Analysis.

Economists say that higher interest rates now in place in

the United States and elsewhere may already be braking the economic rebound that has fired up raw-material demand.

One trigger for the sell-off seems to have been U.S. data on Friday showing a rise in unemployment, seen as an indicator that the economy may be slowing and that bonds are set to rally.

Tokai Bank Europe, however, argues that it would need a substantial economic slowdown to stop commodities going up by perhaps 25 per cent more this year.

Only a sustained slowdown in OECD industrial production growth to below three per cent (year on year) would be sufficient, on a historical basis, to prevent further rises in commodity prices," its latest international economic bulletin says.

London Metal Exchange copper traded Tuesday just above \$2.825 per tonne, that was up from a 1995 low of \$2.780 on Monday but still far below the mid-January high at \$3.081.

Aluminium was assisted Tuesday by news of another big draw of 13,925 tonnes, on London warehouse stocks. It traded a \$10 or so above Monday's close of \$2.050.

Gold was steady just above \$375 per ounce. Benchmark Brent, blend of North Sea crude oil stood easier by some 25 cents from the start of the week to be discussed around \$17.10 per barrel.

Coffee, cocoa and sugar were steady in early London trading after sharp New York-led falls Monday.

Kuwait banks said to regain dinar/foreign exchange role

KUWAIT (R) — Three Kuwait banks and a branch of a Bahrain-based bank have won permission to trade the Kuwaiti dinar on foreign exchanges for their own account for the first time since the 1991 Gulf war, banking sources said Monday.

They said National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), Gulf Bank, Bursan Bank and the local branch of Bahrain-based Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait (BBK) received central bank

authorisation in late 1994. The sources added that NBK and Gulf, the emirate's two "biggest" commercial banks, have also received central bank permission to trade interest rate derivatives for their own account for the first time since the Gulf crisis.

The reforms are part of a central bank plan to strengthen the profitability and competitiveness of a banking system slowly recovering from war losses and long-standing debt problems.

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SHENWAN GARDENS CHINESE RESTA



Spanish tennis star Arantxa Sanchez Vicario during her tennis training session on Monday (AFP photo)

Sanchez-Vicario becomes No. 1

ST. PETERSBURG (Agencies) — Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario of Spain replaced Germany's Steffi Graf on Monday as the top ranked women's tennis player in the world.

Sanchez assumed the number one ranking for the first time in her career when the ailing Graf lost points for failing to defend her title to Tokyo last week. Sanchez has 307,913 points and Graf has 289,193.

Graf, who has not played this year due to a calf injury, also lost all her points for failing to defend her title at the Australian Open the previous week.

Sanchez reached the finals of the Australian Open where she was defeated by Mary Pierce.

The calf injury is the latest in a series of setbacks for Graf.

Graf suffered a back injury during the Canadian Open in August. She managed to make the finals of the U.S. Open but lost to Sanchez-Vicario in three sets when her back injury flared up again.

Graf tried to return for the season-ending Virginia Slims championships in New York but lost to Pierce in her second match.

That loss capped Graf's least productive season in recent years. The Australian Open was her only Grand Slam victory of the year. She lost to Pierce at the French Open, was upset in the opening round at Wimbledon by Lori McNeil and was beaten by Sanchez in the finals at the U.S.

Open.

Graf to make Paris comeback

Steffi Graf will have a special point to prove when she returns from injury to competition for the first time this year as top seed at next week's \$430,000 women's indoor Paris Open.

Dethroned as world number one by Spain's Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario in this week's rankings, Graf will be eager to reassert her authority after missing the season's opening events because of a nagging back injury.

And she will be seeded to meet her arch-rival, Mary Pierce, in the final. Pierce will be making her first appearance in front of home fans since her triumph at the Australian

Open.

Pierce, currently third in the rankings, notched up shock victories over the 25-year-old German at last year's French Open and the end-of-season Virginia Slims Championships in New York.

"As far as we are concerned Steffi is definitely going to be playing," organizers said on Tuesday, soothing reports that Graf may make an 11th hour withdrawal from the 32-player tournament which was won last year by Martina Navratilova.

Other players who will be bidding for the \$79,000 first prize include former Wimbledon finalist Jana Novotna of the Czech Republic, Bulgaria's Magdalena Maleeva and Switzerland's teenage prodigy Martina Hingis.

Leading women's rankings

1. Arantxa Sanchez Vicario (Spain)
2. Steffi Graf (Germany)
3. Mary Pierce (France)
4. Conchita Martinez (Spain)
5. Jana Novotna (Czech Republic)
6. Lindsay Davenport (U.S.)
7. Gabriela Sabatini (Argentina)
8. Natasha Zvereva (Belarus)
9. Kimiko Date (Japan)
10. Anke Huber (Germany)
11. Magdalena Maleeva (Bulgaria)
12. Iva Majoli (Croatia)
13. Brenda Schultz (Netherlands)
14. Naoko Sawamatsu (Japan)
15. Amy Frazier (U.S.)
16. Sabine Hack (Germany)
17. Lori McNeil (U.S.)
18. Julie Halard (France)
19. Mary Joe Fernandez (U.S.)
20. Amanda Coetzer (South Africa)

Nagano determined to host Winter Olympics

NAGANO (AFP) — Nagano, where the Winter Olympics will be held in exactly three years, has sought to reassure international sports leaders that the Kobe earthquake, or other tremors, will not affect the games.

The city leaders are trying to remain as calm as possible while the rest of the country is in a state of near panic over the devastation in Kobe and who will pay the bill to rebuild the city.

"Everything is going well as planned," Nagano Mayor Tasuku Tsukada told AFP. "As Nagano is far from the damaged areas, there is no problem about holding the Olympic Games here."

Two days after the killer quake, Tsukada courteously turned down one offer from

Salt Lake City in the United States to take over the 1998 Games.

But German sports leaders have also made a request for the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to make sure Nagano is not at risk from any new quake. The IOC itself is concerned that rebuilding Kobe may divert funds from the Winter Games showcase, according to international sporting officials.

Nagano, the second Japanese city to host the Winter Olympics, is expected to welcome 1.5 million visitors and 3,000 athletes and officials from around 70 countries for 16 days starting February 7, 1998.

"The sheer numbers involved is what worries us,"

said one international Olympic official.

But Tsukada, outwardly, shrugs off the fuss. "As you see, out there, the construction of facilities and transport is going smoothly," he said.

The central Japanese city is 350 kilometres northeast of Kobe, where more than 5,200 people were killed and more than 110,000 buildings destroyed or damaged.

No matter what was reported in the world press, Nagano was not affected by the quake.

About 30 per cent of the new facilities and bullet-train lines to be built for the Games are ready. The 150 billion yen (\$1.5 billion) worth of construction should be ready by the end of 1997. However, there are some

question marks about Nagano's readiness. According to city officials, no food is kept in reserve for emergencies. There are only 200 blankets kept for 354,000 residents in case of a disaster.

And, like Kobe, the local government has no emergency plans to bring in troops in such an event.

Nagano is also one of many Japanese cities to have been seriously hit by quakes. In 1847, an earthquake measuring 7.4 on the Richter Scale killed 8,600 people.

In the past 50 years, there have been two large quakes measuring higher than 5.0 on the Richter Scale.

Acknowledging worries abroad following the Kobe disaster, Nagano now plans to review emergency mea-

sures. "We already planned to review our disaster programmes so people would not be worried," Tsukada said. "But because there was so much damage in Kobe, we want to make a greater effort in the review so we can withstand such earthquakes."

City officials said it planned to complete the review by the end of 1995, but no details were available yet.

"There is no doubt that another quake like the one in Kobe will hit somewhere in Japan," said Yoshimitsu Okada, chief researcher of the National Research Institute for Earth Science and Disaster Prevention.

About 10 per cent of earthquake in the world occur in Japan or its vicinity.

Clinton extends baseball deadline

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Clinton's deadline for settling the Major League Baseball strike came and went without agreement.

Presidential mediator W.J. Usery did not present his plan for a settlement.

Players filed another unfair labour practice charge with the national labour relations board.

All in all, Monday was not exactly a banner day for the old ball game.

"It's just a few hundred folks trying to figure out how to divide nearly \$2 billion," Clinton said. "They ought to be able to figure that out."

Clinton's deadline of 5 p.m. local time (2200 GMT) for an agreement passed without Usery presenting his terms for a solution. Usery said his recommendations would be ready at 3 p.m. (2000 GMT) Tuesday.

"We simply ran out of time," Usery said. "I refuse to be pessimistic, although it is very difficult to seem to find a voluntary agreement between the parties."

No matter what he did, Usery could not persuade players and owners to meet with each other Monday. They did not speak for the second straight day, even after Clinton ordered them to try to solve the dispute themselves.

Today, according to union head Donald Fehr, Usery hoped to give suggestions to both sides about how they might resolve their differences. Later, Usery planned to take his proposal to the president.

Usery met separately with each side after returning from the White House. Though he has been staying up until the early-morning hours for a week while trying to get a deal, Usery turned in well before midnight.

It was uncertain what Clinton would do if the sides rejected Usery's plan. The president could propose special legislation to enact terms of a settlement or binding arbitration, but both types of bills would have to be approved by the House and Senate.

PORTLAND, Oregon (R) — Routs aren't usually described as "hard-fought," but in this case it fit too well.

Clifford Robinson scored 20 points as the Portland Trail Blazers crushed the Houston Rockets 120-82 on Monday in a game marred by two ugly fights.

Portland outscored Houston 30-10 in the second quarter and cruised the rest of the way for their largest margin of victory over the Rockets.

The game saw two violent incidents. Houston's Otis Thorpe and Portland's Chris Dudley were ejected early in the third quarter for fighting. Late in the period, Houston's Vernon Maxwell and Robert Horry were ejected for fighting with a fan during a timeout.

"It was a hard-fought game," Robinson said. "Everybody was in there trying to bang and establish position and some tempers flared in the second half."

Two fans had been heckling Maxwell throughout the game. Maxwell left the bench and charged 10 to 12 rows into the stands and punched one of the hecklers in the chin. He then grabbed the fan by the throat before Horry broke it up.

Assistant coach Larry Smith also joined the fracas and was ejected.

The fan who said he was hit, Steve George, 35, of Atlanta, said he planned to press charges.

"Absolutely I'm pressing charges," George said as he held an ice pack on his left jaw. "He hit me square...I was hit by an NBA (National Basketball Association) player in the face while I was sitting in row 1 and I'm not happy."

George said many witnesses offered to help him out as he was led from the arena by a security guard.

"All I know is when I walked out of there I probably had six business cards handed to me from people saying 'I saw him hit you,'" George said.

Maxwell, Horry and Smith left memorial coliseum before the game ended and were not available for comment, but Houston's Hakeem Olajuwon said he expects a stiff penalty.

"Everybody's supposed to be a man and be responsible for your action," Olajuwon said. "So, I don't think it was wise to go into the crowd, and we'll pay the price."

The Blazers, who were involved in a bench-clearing incident with Sacramento last month, were more restrained. Under NBA rules, they had five players suspended for one game for leaving the bench in the earlier melee.

"I guess we learn from our mistakes," said Blazer coach P.J. Carlesimo. "I still don't think the rule's a good one, but at least our guys stayed put and we won't lose anybody for next game."

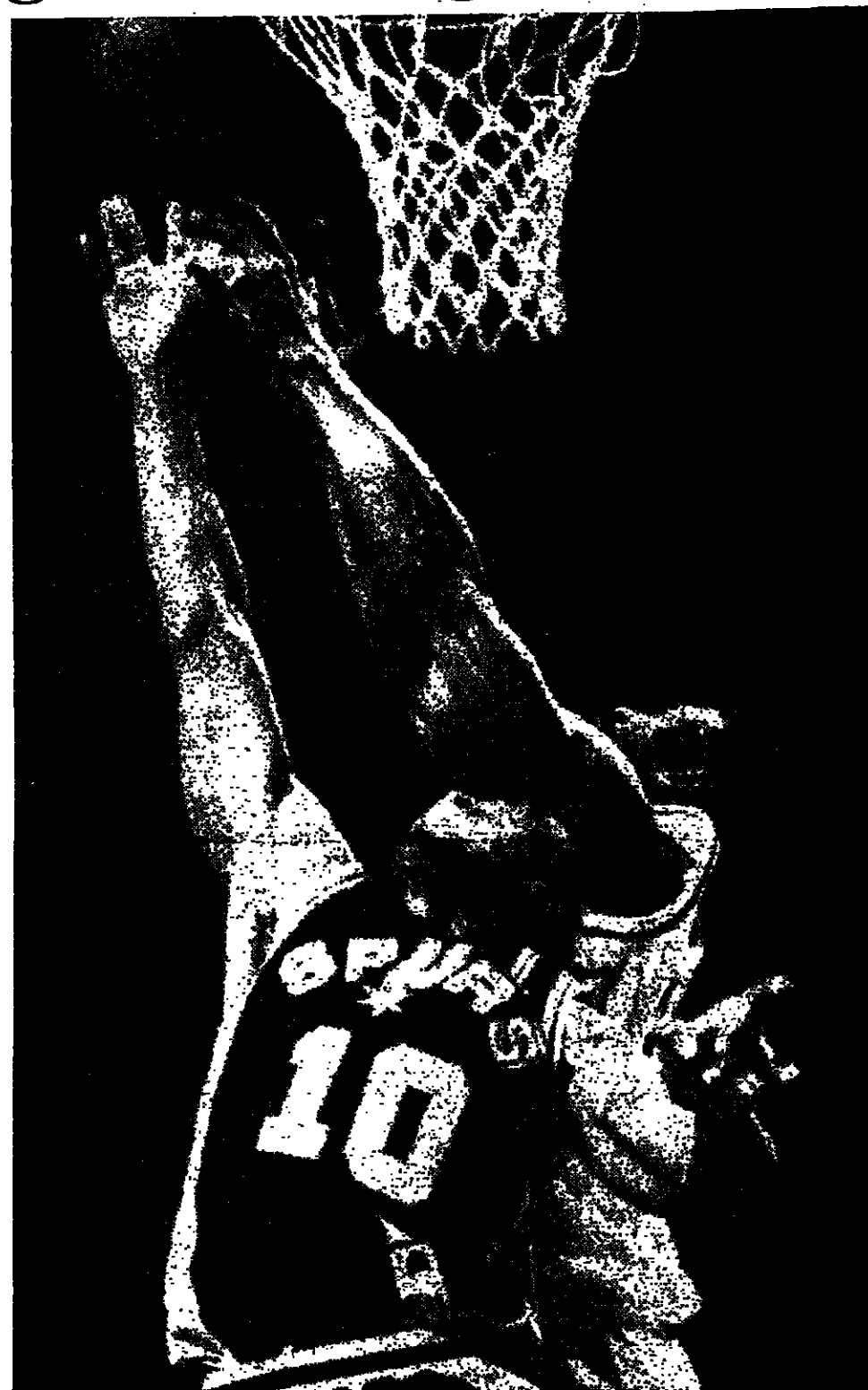
The fighting obscured Portland's performance on the court.

"The guys off the bench played well, the starters played well, we got good minutes from everybody," Robinson said. "If we could harness that type of play, we can really make a run in the second half of the season."

Hakeem Olajuwon scored 22 points and grabbed 11 rebounds for Houston, which had its five-game winning streak snapped. The defending champion Rockets were coming off a 124-100 road rout of the Phoenix Suns, who are tied with Orlando for the best record in the NBA.

"This is life in the NBA. Yesterday we were so up with our win over Phoenix, but today we're down and didn't

Blazers rout Rockets in fight-marred game



Indiana Pacer Dale Davis (right) and San Antonio Spur Dennis Rodman (10) reach for a rebound during first half action in Indianapolis (photo)

play well," said Olajuwon.

The Blazers led by 26 points by halftime and Houston was unable to draw within 20 thereafter. Portland led by as many as 40 points late in the game.

"If they played like that every night, they'd have the best record in the NBA," Olajuwon said. "They moved the ball very well and they passed the ball better than I have seen them. They played very physical. They just played a great game."

James Robinson, Clyde Drexler and Jerome Kersey each scored 16 points and Kersey added a season-high 14 rebounds for the Blazers, who had every player break into the scoring column.

At New Jersey, Armon Gilliam, starting in place of the injured Derrick Coleman, scored a season-high 28 points and grabbed 11 rebounds as the undermanned Nets on for a 101-97 victory over the Detroit Pistons.

Chris Morris added 19 points for the Nets, who are without leading scorers Coleman and Kenny Anderson until after the all-star break. Coleman has a chip fracture of his left hip and Anderson has a sore right forearm.

"I knew I would have to play a different role tonight, but it's nice being in that position," said Gilliam. "I enjoy when guys look to me to do some scoring. I like that situation."

"They're a better team when their two stars are out," observed Detroit head coach Don Chaney. "They want to prove that they can win with-

Joe Dumars scored 27 points for the Pistons, who had won five of their previous seven games.

The Pistons pulled within 100-97 with 28 seconds left, but that was as close as they got. New Jersey had held a 97-89 lead but Sleepy Floyd missed four free throws in the final minute, allowing Detroit to climb back in.

In Philadelphia, Steve Smith and Mookie Blaylock combined for 25 points in the third quarter as the Atlanta Hawks rallied for a 107-92 victory over the slumping 76ers.

Smith scored 15 of his 22 points and Blaylock had 10 of his 21 in the third period, when Atlanta outscored Philadelphia 32-13.

The Hawks led by at least seven points thereafter and spoiled the ceremonies honoring former 76ers point guard Maurice Cheeks, who had his number retired at halftime.

Dana Barros scored 26 points and Willie Burton added 23 for the Sixers, who blew a 16-point second-quarter lead and lost for the seventh time in nine games.

Suns' Danny Manning out for season

In Phoenix, Arizona, Phoenix Suns forward Danny Manning seriously injured his left knee in practice on Monday and will likely miss the remainder of the season.

Manning is believed to have torn the anterior cruciate ligament of his left knee, team physician Richard

Emerson said. He was to undergo X-rays and a magnetic resonance imaging exam to provide additional information on the injury.

"I'm pretty certain he's lost for the year," said coach Paul Westphal.

The loss is a tremendous blow to the team, since the multi-talented, 2.08 metres, 106 kg Manning, although primarily a forward, is capable of playing all five positions and gives the Suns some much-needed size.

Westphal has called Manning his most valuable player this season. In 46 games, Manning was second on the Suns with average of 17.9 and six rebounds per game.

The Suns 36-10 have the best record in the Western Conference and are tied with the Orlando Magic for the best record in the National Basketball Association.

Manning signed a one-year, \$1 million contract, passing up more lucrative offers to play with the Suns and have a chance at an NBA championship.

"My feelings go out to Danny," Suns president Jerry Colangelo said. "He made a tremendous financial sacrifice to come to Phoenix to play this year."

Manning was injured when he collided with teammate Joe Kleine.

RESULTS

Atlanta 107, Philadelphia 92
New Jersey 101, Detroit 97
Portland 120, Houston 82

Lone Atlantic swimmer nears land

PARIS (AFP) — Guy Delage the 42-year-old Frenchman trying to swim alone across the Atlantic, has nearly reached the West Indian island of Barbados after 53 days in the water.

He is expected to sight land on Wednesday and to reach the shore either on Thursday or Friday after swimming or drifting aboard his raft for almost 3,900 kilometres.

Since setting out on December 16 from Cape Verde off West Africa, Delage has swum for an average of seven hours a day. The rest of the time, he has spent aboard his hi-tech raft where he can sleep, cook and communicate via the telephone and a fax machine.

It took Delage several days to get his body acclimatised to life in the ocean and half way across he said he had lost eight to 10 kilograms in weight despite having stockpiled up with extra fat before setting out.

Milan want fans on best behaviour for Arsenal match

MILAN (Agencies) — AC Milan are demanding exemplary behaviour from their followers when they host England's Arsenal in the European Super Cup second leg Wednesday.

The match is the first staged in Italy since a young Genoa supporter was stabbed to death before a game against European champions Milan on January 29. Simone Barbaglia, an 18-year-old Milan fan, has been charged with murder.

The Italian Olympic Committee suspended all sport last Sunday to show its determination to conquer hooliganism. It is now up to Milan, a club whose image has increasingly been tarnished by violence, to set the right example at the San Siro.

Milan spokesman Ugo Allevi said that about 2,000 English fans were expected to make the journey from North London for a tie which stands at 0-0 after a dull first leg.

"There won't be any special security measures for them. They will all be housed in a special sector of the stadium, segregated from the Milan fans," he said. "What we're most concerned about

is how our fans behave." English soccer, dogged by violence for many years, reached a low point in 1985 when 39 fans, most of them Italians, were killed at the Heysel Stadium in Brussels as Liverpool fans rioted before the European Cup final with Juventus.

But English crowd control has since won the respect of many Italians and the press warmly praised the atmosphere during the first leg at Highbury last Wednesday.

Arsenal came to Italy to play Torino on their way to lifting the European Cup Winners' Cup last season and there were no reports of trouble. Their victory over Italy's Parma in the final in Copenhagen was equally free of fan violence.

Milan seek to claim the Super Cup — the annual meeting between the European champions and Cup Winners' Cup holders — for the third time after taking the 1989 and 1990 editions.

They start as favourites after the 0-0 draw in London but will seek to avoid a repetition of last year when they lost 2-0 to Parma at the San Siro after winning the

away leg 1-0.

For Arsenal the glamorous European date is welcome relief from a disappointing domestic season.

The Londoners, who were expected to challenge for the title, are struggling for goals in mid-table and had captain Tony Adams and striker John Harrison sent off as they slumped to a 3-1 defeat by Sheffield Wednesday on Saturday.

Players and fans evaluate soccer-less Sunday

After a day without soccer, officials and fans kicked around the results Monday. The conclusion: more must be done to control violence.

"At least we've started doing something about it. Our efforts will continue, but it is indispensable that the government and parliament make some decisions without which we will be defenseless in the face of violence," said Mario Pescante, president of Italy's Olympic Committee.

And while the "ultras" — the Italian equivalent of British hooligans — pledged to give up their arms, their violent language suggested that tensions would continue.



America's Cup

All boats deliver spectacular racing

SAN DIEGO (R) — Every team on the America's Cup course delivered spectacular racing on Monday as the four winners eked out narrow victories with no margin greater than 54 seconds.

Marc Pajot's France 3, Peter Blake's Team New Zealand, John Bertrand's One Australia and Dennis Conner's Stars Stripes were the winners.

"We're going to have some great races in the America's Cup in the rounds to come," said Peter Lester, tactician on Tag Heuer Challenge.

The most dramatic battle was between Pajot's team and Pedro Campos' Rioja de Espana. Campos, for the first time in the America's Cup trials, competed in a close boat-for-boat battle proving that his boat and crew do have some speed potential.

Campos was obviously ecstatic with the result. "We broke a runner on the last leg and were unable to gybe to cover our preferred side," he said. "But we're looking forward to round three now the boat is looking

more competitive.

Rioja de Espana won the start, after forcing France 3 over the line, and held the advantage until the two final legs, a fierce tacking and gybing continued throughout the race with France 3 just managing to get ahead and cross the finish line with a mere 22-second advantage.

"It just shows you that you can't make an unforced error and expect a way out," said Harold Cudmore, coach to France 3, on his team's start. "But Pedro did a very good job and it shows he can be very competitive. We were glad to finally get ahead."

All the other matches were just as closely fought. Team New Zealand's margin of victory over Chris Dickson's Tag Heuer was 54 seconds while One Australia managed to fight off a charge to the finish line by Syd Fischer's Sydney 95 to take the narrowest win of the day at 19 seconds.

Sydney 95 was sailing with a change in the afterguard. Michael Coxon helmed the entire race in the absence of Neville Wittey, who has temporarily returned to Australia. Neal McDonald took over as tactician.

Team New Zealand's victory maintained its lead position in the Challenger standings at 14 points, just one point ahead of One Australia.

On the Defender course the all-women's team America3 (cubed) skipped by Leslie Egnot pushed hard

against Stars Stripes but could never get past. Conner won by 28 seconds, despite Egnot's gain of nearly half a minute on the run to the

finish line. Stars Stripes heads the Defender standings with 11 points, four ahead of Kevin Mahaney's Young America.



Crewmembers on OneAustralia set a spinnaker after rounding the weather mark in their race against Sydney 95 during the America's Cup Challenger series off the coast of San Diego.

Corretja crashes in Dubai Open

DUBAI (AP) — Spain's Alex Corretja became the first seeded player to crash in the \$1 million Dubai Open, beaten by Sweden's Henrik Holm 4-6, 6-2, 7-5 in tennis action Monday.

Seven of the world's top players battle for supremacy on the hard courts of the Aviation Club for the tournament, which opened Monday and runs through Sunday.

They include the world No. 4 and French Open champion Sergi Bruguera, the top seed, and Wimbledon finalist and world No. 5 Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia, seeded 2.

Saving four of the seven break points in his service game, the 22nd-seeded Holm whizzed up the match in one hour 51 minutes on the hard court surface, which the eighth-seeded Corretja thought he knew pretty well.

"I could have lost the match," Holm, world No. 67, acknowledged later. "He put a lot of top spin in the ball and I'm not too fond of that. But I played aggressive the whole match and stayed calm. That's why I won," he said.

Holm was on the edge from the very first serve. He produced nine double faults and dumped countless volleys into the net. Holm could have won the contest in straight sets. He led 3-1 in the opening set but went on to drop five of his next six games to give the Spaniard, who is world No. 22, the advantage.

Holm took control of the second set and broke to lead 2-1, then 4-1. The Swede had another break at the beginning of the third set.

Abdul-Jabbar voted into Basketball Hall of Fame

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. (AP) — Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, the NBA's all-time leading scorer who played on nine championship teams in college and in the pros, was voted into the Basketball Hall of Fame Monday along with six others.

Also voted into the hall were Women's Olympic and college stars Cheryl Miller and Anne Donovan, former Soviet coach Aleksandr Gomelsky, former NBA official Earl Strom, forward Vern Mikkelsen and coach John Kundla.

Gomelsky, whose '88 team won the Olympic gold medal, was nominated by the international committee.

Known as the father of Soviet men's basketball, Gomelsky compiled a 490-177 record over his 29 years of coaching. He guided the Soviet national team to seven European championships between 1959 and 1981 and World Championships in 1967 and 1982. His teams also won a silver medal at the 1964 Olympics and bronze medals at the 1968 and 1980 Games.

Mikkelsen was one of the NBA's first power forwards, while Kundla coached Mikkelsen and also let the Minneapolis Lakers to six pro championships in the 1940s and '50s.

"I'm just happy things worked out," Abdul-Jabbar said Monday from an Atlanta hotel after being informed he had been elected. "It hasn't sunk in yet."

"I don't know what to say. It's such a thrill," Kundla said. "We already had five Hall of Famers from the (Minneapolis) Lakers. And now Vern. And me, too."

The first person Kundla called was Mikkelsen. "I was a power forward, before we had a name for it," laughed the 2.01-meter Mikkelsen.

The other Minneapolis Lakers in the hall are George Mikan, Slater Martin, Jim Pollard, Elgin Baylor and Clyde Lovellette. The Minneapolis team kept the nickname Lakers when it moved to Los Angeles in 1960.

"It is, of course, an honour for Kareem to be inducted into the Hall of Fame," said Hall of Famer Jerry West, an executive vice president with the Los Angeles Lakers. "It's also an honour for the hall to have Kareem as a member. He is without a doubt the most consummate professional

I've ever seen and, if not the greatest player of all time, certainly one of two or three greatest."

"Six world championship rings. Six MVP awards. I can't think of anyone, who could be more deserving," Lakers owner Jerry Buss said.

There were also 19 all-star appearances for the NBA's all-time leader in scoring with 44,149 points. He also holds records for games played (1,797) and blocked shots (3,189).

From the time the 2.19-metre Abdul-Jabbar, then known as Lew Alcindor, stepped onto the power Memorial High School court in New York City 1961, through his three NCAA college championships at UCLA and 20 years in the NBA with Milwaukee and Los Angeles, he dominated the game as few men have.

His high school teams lost six games. His college teams were defeated twice. Yet he was ridiculed because of his height. "He was subjected to things that, had it been me, I would have really flared up," former UCLA coach John Wooden said. "But he didn't."

And in the tall young man's "intelligence, unselfishness and amazing self-control," Wooden said he found some lessons.

"I learned more from Lewis, as I called him then, than from any other one player I ever had," Wooden said. "I am not talking about basketball now, but about man's inhumanity to man."

Wooden, who guided UCLA to 10 NCAA titles, called Abdul-Jabbar "the most valuable player the college game has ever had: On or off the court."

Donovan, a 2.03-metre centre, led Old Dominion to the women's national college championship in 1980 and helped boost the U.S. women's Olympic team to gold medals in 1984 and 1988. She is now an assistant coach at Old Dominion.

Miller, also a member of the '84 Olympic, led Southern Cal. to the NCAA college championships in '83 and '84 and ranks second only to hall of famer Carol Blazejowski in scoring. She is now the coach at Southern Cal. Her brother, Reggie, is an all-star guard for the Indiana Pacers.

U.S. athletic footwear makers plan for trade war with China

ATLANTA (AP) — Makers of athletic footwear, one of the main products targeted for U.S. tariffs against China, said Monday they're already planning to shift production elsewhere should efforts to avert a trade war fail.

The shoe manufacturers, in Atlanta for the final day of a big sporting goods trade show, also warned that the sure loser in a trade war would be the U.S. consumer, who would quickly have to pay more for sneakers, cleats and cross-trainers.

There was some uncertainty among exhibitors at the super show over precisely which sporting goods would be affected by the threatened U.S. sanctions, though many felt the \$7.9 billion athletic footwear business, which depends heavily on Chinese imports, was likely to be hit.

"We're not letting all our eggs be in the same basket. If we have to we could shift production to Indonesia, of course not overnight," said Alain Ronc, president of Nashville, Tennessee-based Mitre Sports International, a

leading producer of soccer equipment, including shoes.

Ronc said most U.S. footwear companies rely on China for about half of their production. He said most probably have contingency plans, and there would likely be a rush to increase production at the alternative sites.

Tom Cove, director of government operations for the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association, said the proposed tariff was "limited to certain specific footwear styles such as women's models and some jogging shoes. That should make it easier for companies to adapt, he said.

Cove said the sporting goods industry in general supports efforts to combat Chinese piracy, the main reason for the proposed tariffs.

John Bobbett, managing director of Champion footwear of Tarrytown, New York, said he doubted many shoe companies were taken unaware by the Clinton administration's weekend threat

to impose 100-per cent tariffs on \$1.08 billion worth of Chinese products. The United States and China agreed Monday to resume talks next week in Beijing in hopes of heading off a potential trade war.

The company is contacting plants in Indonesia, the Philippines and Taiwan to pick up the slack, should production in China become prohibitive, Bobbett said.

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♣ A 3 2
EAST
♠ J 9 6 5 3
♥ Q J 7
♦ A K 10 8 6 4 3 2
♣ K J 9 8 4
SOUTH
♠ A K 6 4 2
♥ K 10 9 5
♦ Q 3
♣ Q 3
The bidding:
South West North East
1♠ 2♥ Dbl Pass
2♥ Pass 4♥ Pass
Pass Pass
Opening lead: King of ♠
Here's an interesting test of your analytical powers. Follow the bidding and play of this deal, then pick out the errors and rank them in order of severity. Note that North's double was negative, for takeout rather than penalties.

North's jump to four hearts is a little aggressive. However, two aces and five-card trump support is no mean hand, so North does not deserve censure for that action. As for the West hand, we think it is either too strong or not strong enough for the Unusual No Trump convention; therefore, the two diamond overall was equally appropriate.
West led the king of diamonds and, in response to East's play of the ace, continued with ace of diamonds and another. East ruffed the table's jack with the jack of hearts and declarer overruffed. With the spade breaking badly, declarer eventually conceded a trump trick and a club for down one.
The first error, albeit a very subtle one, came at the first trick: Since East had a natural trump trick, there was no need to signal for a diamond continuation. East should have played the lower of the two diamonds to ask partner for a switch. Since the club shift would be automatic, the contract would, to all intents and purposes, have been down from the start.
The greater error came two tricks later and it was committed by the declarer. Instead of overruffing the third diamond, South should simply have discarded a club. This play, known as a loser on loser, would have guaranteed the contract. Declarer can win any return, draw trumps in two rounds and crossruff for the rest of the tricks.

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PHILADELPHIA		PLAZA		CONCORD		AMMOUN THEATRE	Nabil Al Mashini Theatre	AHLAN THEATRE
Yusra, Mahmoud Hamedieh in The Immigrant Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		Bruce Willis...in DIE HARD II Shows: 12:30, 2:30, 8:30, 10:30 The movie: THE LION KING will be shown on Fridays and Thursdays at 11:00 a.m. & 12:30 p.m.		CONCORD '1' ROBOCOP '3' Shows: 12:30, 2:45, 6:30, 8:15, 10:30 CONCORD '2' Sylvester Stallone — Sharon Stone in The Specialist Shows: 2:45, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		SUM'A in the satirical play HI CITIZEN Composed and directed by Mohammad Al Shawagfeh Daily from 8:30 p.m. Children's Play The Ninja Turtles Show Directed by Akram Abul Ragheb Daily at 10:30 p.m.	Presents Abu Awwad In the social comedy Punctured Bag The theatre is closed on Mondays Tickets are available all day	Presents: The political satire: AL SALAM YA SALAM at 8:30 p.m. For reservation, please call 625155 The theatre is closed on Saturdays & Sundays

Brown: U.S. committed to help Palestinian trade, investment

GAZA CITY (Agencies) — Declaring that "Gaza is open for business," U.S. Commerce Secretary Ron Brown on Tuesday brought U.S. investors to the autonomous area to meet with their Palestinian counterparts.

"We are bringing together a public-private partnership," Mr. Brown said at the opening of a U.S. government business seminar at a community centre in Gaza City.

Mr. Brown also met with Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat at the Palestinian leader's headquarters.

In the meeting, Mr. Arafat committed himself to combating Palestinian militants opposed to making peace with Israel, Mr. Brown said.

The secretary said Mr. Arafat's pledge could help ease the closure that Israel clamped on the Gaza Strip and the West Bank in response to the Jan. 22 double bombing in central Israel in which 21 people were killed. The bombers were members of the Islamic Jihad group from Gaza.

Mr. Brown said U.S.-Palestinian economic relations have a way to go. "The chairman (said) a moment ago he was starting from zero. We're starting from zero as well. This is the beginning of a process," Mr. Brown told the news conference.

At the seminar, 10 U.S. business people and 15 Palestinian economists and entrepreneurs explored possible joint ventures and private investment in the financially strapped Gaza Strip.

Mr. Brown said Washington was keen to help improve living conditions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and wanted to include the Palestinian self-rule authority in its Generalised System of Preferences (GSP).

"I indicated to Chairman Arafat that he has the commitment of President Clinton on this matter," Mr. Brown told the joint news conference with Mr. Arafat in Gaza.

"We are taking formal administrative steps that will certainly help matters of commerce and trade. It will help in the creation of jobs," he said.

The White House announced last week that Mr. Clinton had ended the GSP programme for Israel. The programme offers duty-free treatment to specified products sold in the United States. It is primarily aimed at helping developing countries.

Palestinian officials said they have been negotiating with Washington to be included in the GSP and expect to be granted the status by April.

Mr. Arafat said he was

pleased by the U.S. assurances on trade.

"This visit is a clear signal from His Excellency President Clinton and Mr. Brown of the support of the American administration to the Palestinians," Mr. Arafat said.

Mr. Brown announced the launching of two projects established or being planned by U.S. companies from a group of Arab-American and Jewish-American businessmen eager to invest in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Mr. Arafat told the Americans that the Palestinians badly needed help to build their infrastructure.

"We are sure this coordination and cooperation can do a lot for our people, for the peace process and for our children," Mr. Arafat said.

Mr. Brown has called for private investment in the Palestinian self-rule areas in the past. However, U.S. officials travelling with the secretary said that since autonomy began last May, only one private U.S.-Palestinian venture was formed, a factory making building materials in the Gaza Strip.

The U.S. government offers private investors loan guarantees and political risk insurance as incentives, the officials said.

Ziad Karam, a member of Mr. Brown's delegation, announced at the seminar

plans to build a hotel in Gaza.

Mr. Brown said economic stability was a condition for the success of the peace process. "We also know that the peace process brings high expectations among the people... and we want to do everything we can to help in that change."

Addressing the seminar, he said: "We are here today on serious business. We want to declare publicly, with you, that Gaza is open for business."

There has been no visible improvement in Gaza's economy since Mr. Arafat took control in July, with unemployment hovering around 50 per cent. The situation deteriorated further after Israel sealed the Strip, keeping tens of thousands of Palestinians from their jobs in Israel.

Mr. Brown's stopover in Gaza is part of a weeklong Middle East tour promoting U.S. trade and investment in the region.

Palestinians, seeking greater access to world markets, will push for a preferential trade pact with Washington at a meeting in Taba, Egypt, on Tuesday of trade ministers from the United States, Israel and Arab peace partners.

"Palestinian products have not been admitted to the United States before under a Palestinian label," chief

(Continued on page 7)



HIGHER COMMITTEE MEETS: His Royal Highness Prince Hassan on Tuesday (Petra photo) chairs a meeting of the Higher Steering Committee.

Algerian film director attacked

ALGIERS (Agencies) — Two armed men shot and seriously wounded Algerian movie director Djamel Fezzaz in downtown Algiers, security forces said Tuesday.

Mr. Fezzaz, 44, was shot Monday by "two armed criminals" during a visit to a family in Bab Al Oued, a fundamentalist fief near the casbah, security forces said.

The word "criminals" has recently become the official designation for Islamic extremists.

The report of the attack on Fezzaz was first carried in the French-language daily Liberte. The paper said the director, who works for the state-run National Enterprise for Audio Visual Production, was hit by three bullets in the face and arms but was not in danger of death.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack. Islamic extremists, who mounted an insurgency three years ago, have been blamed for numerous killings of Algerian artists, intellectuals and journalists, as well as foreigners.

An estimated 30,000 people have been killed in the conflict between extremists and security forces that began after the army cancelled national elections to thwart a probable victory by the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS).

Meanwhile, the London-based Arabic language newspaper Al Hayat reported Tuesday that the front's top two leaders have been sent back to prison because they failed to call for an end to the violence.

Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj were transferred last September from military prison to house arrest in a state-owned villa in an effort by President Liamine Zouroual to negotiate an end to the crisis. Authorities said the two, both serving 12-year prison terms, reneged on a deal to call for a truce.

Al Hayat, quoting informed sources, said authorities found it "useless" to keep the two under house arrest.

There was no immediate confirmation of the report.

Lawyers for the number three salvation front leader, Abdul Kader Hachani, announced that their client, jailed since elections, were cancelled in January 1992, has been on a hunger strike since last Thursday.

He is protesting the continued postponement of his trial and demanding to be judged.

French row

French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe, trying to calm a rift with Algeria's military rulers, said Tuesday that Paris had always favoured a dialogue to end the country's civil war, but that it was up to the Algerians to organise it.

Mr. Juppe was speaking after a meeting on Algeria with Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, Interior Minister Charles Pasqua and Defence Minister Francois Leotard following President Francois Mitterrand's call last Friday for European Union ministers to convene a conference on the Islamic insurrection in Algeria.

Mr. Pasqua for his part said the premier's office would issue a clarification later on Tuesday, but Mr. Juppe implied this would not be necessary.

"The clarification was already made yesterday by Mr. Pasqua and myself.

Peres sees no need for daily check of popularity

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said on Monday his government's peace policy did not need to be "applauded every morning" by Israeli public opinion.

"To my taste, a test of a government is when it can continue its policy without being applauded every morning, because the policy is the right one," he said.

Mr. Peres, now on a visit to the United States, was speaking to reporters at the United Nations after briefing all 15 Security Council members, other diplomats and senior U.N. officials on the Middle East peace process. He said the group included representatives of seven Arab delegations.

Asked whether Israel's Labour-led government was losing domestic support, in view of a recent spate of fatal attacks against Israelis by Palestinians opposed to the peace process, he added: "We got a mandate for four years. We don't have to test our popularity every morning."

"On the contrary, we have to show that even through corridors of lack of popularity, we are maintaining the mandate that we have gotten."

Popularity polls were "like perfume, nice to smell but dangerous to swallow," he added.

"The sentiment in Israel is for peace, but there is a strong feeling that fighting terror must be a joint venture of all the parties who are seeking peace."

He confirmed that during his briefing, the question of Israeli settlements in occupied territories had been raised.

He said he replied that Israel had a three-point policy of its own: Not to add new settlements or to confiscate land for new settlements or to enlarge existing ones and not to invest public money in building houses or apartments in the settlements.

There is "no need for more commitment" from Israel on the settlements, he told reporters.

"It's a unilateral Israeli decision. We are not going to say to the Israeli public that we changed our policy because of Palestinian or anybody else's pressure. We act out of conviction, not out of pressure," he said.

An Israeli diplomat said Israel was dead set against public debate in the U.N. Security Council on the settlements, such as the Palestine Liberation Organisation asked for last month, saying it could make the "atmosphere worse."

Asked if Israel had shifted its refusal to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Mr. Peres said it had not.

For a third time, key suspect switches sides

NEW YORK (AP) — In Siddig Ibrahim Siddig Ali, prosecutors in the biggest terrorism trial in U.S. history have gained a smooth-talking, college-educated and handsome witness, a fresh weapon against their chief target — a blind Egyptian sheikh.

But Mr. Siddig Ali comes with considerable baggage, including hundreds of pages of transcripts from taped conversations in which he appears to be the ringleader of plots to destroy U.S. landmarks and kill political figures.

He also had agreed to cooperate last summer, only to change his mind and flip back to the defence.

The guilty plea Monday comes just as prosecutors are trying to build momentum against Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, the 56-year-old cleric who allegedly guided what prosecutors have dubbed a war of "urban terrorism."

Now, the prosecution has two turncoats and an informant to testify against the sheikh and 10 others accused of conspiring to attack U.S. landmarks and leaders to pressure the United States to change its policies in the Middle East, particularly towards Egypt and Israel.

After the Feb. 26, 1993 World Trade Centre bombing that killed six people and caused a \$500,000 in damage, government informant Emad Salem asked Mr. Siddig Ali in a secretly recorded conversation why that site was picked.

"The operation is to make them lose millions. And that happened," he answered, according to transcripts. "This is the message: We want to tell them, you're not far from us and we can get you anytime."

When the defendants were arrested in the trade centre case Mr. Siddig Ali suggested to Mr. Salem that they kill some Federal Bureau of In-

vestigation (FBI) agents in retaliation. If they were convicted, he suggested, "we'll hit them with missiles and we will take hostages," according to the transcript.

Mr. Siddig Ali, born in Sudan, came to the United States in 1988. He worked briefly as a cab driver in the Bronx but his licence was suspended twice and revoked twice.

He also worked as a guard at a real estate firm, where he met his wife, a native of Trinidad. They settled in Jersey City, New Jersey.

According to a statement he gave during his guilty plea, Mr. Siddig Ali said he met with Sheikh Abdul Rahman in late 1990 and quickly became involved in the terrorism case or convicted in the trade centre bombing.

By the time he was arrested in the plot in June 1993, he was planning multiple bombings and looking forward to retiring with the others in the Philippines, he said.

After talking with the government for eight weeks last summer in a failed bid at cooperation, Mr. Siddig Ali telephoned his former lawyer, Ron Kuby.

"He indicated the government wanted him to lie and he refused to lie for the government," Mr. Kuby said. "They squeezed him like a grape and when they were done with him, he refused to lie and they threw him back in the defence pool."

Mr. Kuby said when he went to visit Mr. Siddig Ali, though, the former client refused to see him. In a court appearance shortly afterwards, Mr. Siddig Ali appeared nervous as he sat in new government-bought clothing rather than usual prison-issued garb.

"He's a tragic, pathetic figure who clearly will do anything or say anything to anybody who can help him," Mr. Kuby said.

COLUMN

Suicide rate soaring in Estonia

GOTHENBURG, Sweden (AFP) — The suicide rate in Estonia has doubled in five years to reach the highest level in Europe, an Estonian doctor told a medical conference Monday. Arno Aadamsoo of Tartu University blamed the increase on growing alcoholism and intense pressure to succeed in the new market economy following the Baltic republic's independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. From 1988 to 1993, the suicide rate jumped from 40 to 80 cases per 100,000 people, and the other two Baltic republics, Latvia and Lithuania, have witnessed similar increases, Mr. Aadamsoo said. In the 1980s, he said, the Estonian government waged a programme against alcoholism and Estonians "were hopeful because liberation from the Soviet system seemed near." But now, both alcoholism and social pressures are on the rise. Mr. Aadamsoo said Estonia's market economy has meant "a faster work pace for entrepreneurs and businessmen, people who don't think about their health."

Japan approves gene therapy for first time

TOKYO (AFP) — The Japanese government has given its approval for the first time to controversial gene therapy, as part of treatment for a four-year-old boy suffering from immune deficiency. But Health Minister Shochi Ide urged doctors Tuesday to adopt a cautious approach, taking ethical considerations into account. Mr. Ide told a news conference that it was hoped the treatment would lead to "a major breakthrough." His ministry gave its approval for the gene therapy Monday. It will involve extracting lymphocytes from the boy, mixing them with normal adenovirus deaminase (ADA) genes, before reinserting them in the hope that a normal immune system will develop. The boy was born lacking ADA. Even a common cold could prove fatal to him. Mr. Ide said he recognised the need to promote advanced medical technology but hoped doctors would exercise extreme caution. Hokkaido University Hospital is expected to begin the therapy on the boy next month.

Sikhs to donate gold to beautify shrine

NEW DELHI, India (AP) — Indian Sikhs living in Britain will donate 500 kilograms (1,100 pounds) of gold to beautify their faith's holiest shrine — the Golden Temple in the Punjab city of Amritsar, news reports said Tuesday. The temple was the centre of a Sikh separatist campaign for a homeland and the scene of a fierce battle between Indian troops and entrenched Sikh militants in 1984. Later that year, two Sikh bodyguards assassinated Prime Minister Indira Gandhi for ordering troops into the shrine. Sikhs living in Britain felt the urge to replace the worn out gold plating that dons the temple top, the Indian Express newspaper reported. It will cost an estimated 50 million rupees (\$1.6 million) to buy the gold and put it on the dome. The gold plating of the temple was first done by Sikh ruler Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the early 18th century. Since then the gold has not been replaced.

World's tallest building proposed for Melbourne

MELBOURNE (R) — A proposal by an Australian company to build the world's tallest office building in Melbourne — a city with 24 per cent office vacancy — won support from the Victorian state government Monday. Victoria's deputy premier, Pat McNamara, said the proposal by the Grollo Construction Group to build the 500-metre (1,640 ft) building reflected a "new spirit of enthusiasm" in the state, which was hit badly by Australia's recent economic recession. The construction group's chief executive, Bruno Grollo, said Sunday he wanted to build a three-sided gold tower, representing the sun and the moon and the planets and stars.

Iran wants unconditional talks on island dispute

NICOSIA (Agencies) — Iran said Tuesday it was prepared for unconditional talks with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to settle a dispute over three Gulf islands but declined to relinquish its territorial claims.

Tehran Radio, monitored in Cyprus, quoted Foreign Ministry spokesman Mahmoud Mohammad as criticising the stance taken by eight Arab countries in Cairo with regard to the islands.

The Iranian official said the stance was "one-sided" because it did not reflect Iran's "goodwill" in the dispute.

The foreign ministers of Syria, Egypt and the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council called on Iran Monday to relinquish its occupation of the islands, which are claimed by the UAE.

The ministers said in a statement that they supported UAE sovereignty over the islands and urged Iran to accept the emirates' proposal to refer the dispute to the World Court.

Syrian endorsement of the statement came as a surprise. It is one of Iran's main Arab allies.

Iran has rejected World Court arbitration over the islands, insisting on direct talks.

"On the basis of goodwill and good neighbourliness Iran welcomes the continuation of bilateral talks in order

to overcome this misunderstanding, and it is the UAE which instead of taking constructive steps to overcome this misunderstanding continues its baseless claims," the spokesman said.

Both Iran and the UAE claim sovereignty over the islands of Abu Musa, and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs.

Iran may sign NPT

Iran, suspected by Israel and the United States of trying to develop an atomic bomb, says a global treaty meant to halt the spread of nuclear arms is flawed so long as the Jewish state remained outside its control.

But it also suggested that it would remain a signatory for the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) when it comes for renewal even if Israel does not join.

"Israel is in no way under atomic control or surveillance, it has not signed the NPT and does not permit the International Atomic Energy Agency to inspect its nuclear installations," the head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation Reza Amrollahi was quoted as saying by Iran News newspaper on Monday.

But he suggested Iran would remain an NPT signatory despite the flaws in the treaty "because Iran did not wish to be comparable to Israel's usurper government."

EU deal looks closer for Turkey, good for Cyprus

ANKARA (R) — Customs union with Europe, a goal that has eluded Turkey for decades, seems within its grasp and developments may help end a dispute with Greece over the division of Cyprus, analysts said on Tuesday.

European Union (EU) foreign ministers, meeting in Brussels on Monday, agreed in principle on customs union with Ankara. The deal must still be approved by the Joint Association Council, to meet on March 6-7.

As an apparent counterweight for the removal of a standing Greek veto on Turkey's rapprochement with the EU, the ministers also agreed to begin membership negotiations with Cyprus after 1996.

"Sufficient time has been given before launching talks with Cyprus. This leaves Turkey's options open. It is not as if the EU will start talks with Cyprus tomorrow," said Seyfi Tashan, chairman of the independent Foreign Policy Institute.

"Greece may still put up obstacles before March but the customs union looks set to happen," he told Reuters.

Turkey, an associate member since 1963, agreed with the European Community in 1973 on a 22-year transition period to enter customs union. Its 1987 bid for full membership however, has been shelved by tacit mutual agreement.

The Greek veto on Turkey's ties with the EU stems from the division of Cyprus since 1974 when Turkish troops occupied its north shortly after advocates of union with Greece toppled the government in Nicosia.

Turkey, the only country to recognise the Turkish republic of northern Cyprus, maintains 29,000 troops in the north.

In northern Cyprus, Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash declined immediate comment saying he would need to study the outcome of Monday's talks.

"Every single word is important. We must study it before reacting," he told Reuters.

Prominent Turkish columnist Mehmet Ali Birand said Ankara should stand to gain in Cyprus as well.

"Turkey has openly warned the EU that if they only take the Greek Cypriot side, they will be responsible for the effective partition of the island," he wrote in Sabah daily.

"One way or other, a solution to the Cyprus problem is drawing closer," he said.

Ankara and Mr. Denktash back Cyprus's accession to the EU but say it should only happen after the two rival communities are united in a federal state — a goal that has eluded all efforts by the United Nations and others for two decades.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Lebanon wants Italy to take back waste

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon's parliament wants Italy to take back thousands of barrels of toxic waste dumped in the middle eastern country during its 1975-90 civil war, the head of a parliamentary committee said. Hagop Johkadar, head of the parliamentary environment committee, told reporters after a late-night session on Monday that Italy should pay the cost of taking back the waste sent to Lebanon in 1987-88. He said the committee was asking the government to ask Italy to take back the waste at its own expense. The government ordered a high-level inquiry last week after Greenpeace, the international watchdog, said the 10,000 barrels of waste were "ecological time bombs" and offered to help get Italy to take them back. Mr. Johkadar said a secret Lebanese army investigation in 1988 concluded that 1,500 barrels were buried in Lebanon and the rest were dumped in the sea or destroyed.

Israel opens police station in Gaza

NEVE DEKALIM, The Gaza Strip (AFP) — Police Minister Moshe Shahal opened the first border police station in a Jewish settlement on the Gaza Strip on Tuesday in a bid to improve security. The Neve Dekalim station, manned by 78 officers, will serve the bloc of colonies in the south of the Strip where most of the 5,000 Gaza settlers live. "This station is part of our new operation in the Gaza Strip," said police spokesman Eric Bar Chen, following the launch of an autonomous zone in the territory last May. He said 370 policemen maintain order in the Israeli-held areas of Gaza. Mr. Shahal underlined his support for total separation between Israelis and Palestinians.

Haq says militants could be crucified

CAIRO (R) — One of Islam's leading religious scholars has said Egypt's Muslim militants qualify for the severest Islamic penalty including crucifixion and amputation. Gad Al Haq Ali Gad Al Haq, the sheikh of Al Azhar, said in the Nile Valley town of Beni Suef that militants did not deserve to be called "religious extremists," let alone "Islamic groups" — the title the militants use themselves. "They are just criminals because Islam does not recognise murder, violence or upsetting stability," he added. He was quoted in the government newspaper Al Gumbouria on Tuesday. The sheikh said the militants, whose hallmark is killing policemen, qualified for what Islamic law calls "hadd al haraba," the penalty reserved for those "who fight God and his prophet and spread corruption on earth." Citing the Koranic verse on the subject, he said: "They should be killed, or crucified, or have their hands and feet cut off... or be expelled from the earth. That is their punishment in this world and they will have a great torture in the next."

Mobile telephones banned from Knesset

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli members of parliament have been banned from using mobile telephones during full session after complaints from Speaker Shevah Meiss about disruption from the constant ringing. "It is unfortunate that the representatives of the people take personal calls during debates and whisper into their phones like stage prompters," Mr. Weiss told the Knesset affairs committee which voted out portables on Monday. Deputies will still be able to stay in touch during committee meetings, although they were asked to keep calls to a minimum.

Russian envoy, Sharaa holds talks

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa discussed the Middle East peace process with a senior Russian envoy here Tuesday. The official news agency SANA said Mr. Sharaa's talks with Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Posavalyuk also covered bilateral relations. Syria is the first leg of a Middle East tour by Mr. Posavalyuk which will also take in Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and the occupied territories. Diplomats said Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev would embark on a Middle East tour in March.

Kuwait MPs say Israel bombing heroic act

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwaitis approve of a Palestinian suicide bombing that killed 21 Israelis and oppose their government's condemnation of the attack, members of parliament (MPs) said on Tuesday. "That was a heroic act against an aggressive occupier," MP Adnan Abdul Samad said in an interview. MP and former Trade and Industry Minister Abdullah Al Hajeri suggested Kuwait's condemnation of the Jan. 22 attack was the result of U.S. diplomatic pressure. "The statement issued by the government I regard as a black spot in the history of Kuwait," Mr. Hajeri told Reuters, echoing a common view among MPs gathered for parliament's weekly session. "That statement stirred popular resentment."